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IN
PARADISE

A NOVEL

FROM THE GERMAN OF
PAUL HEYSE

VOL. I



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* * *It has been decided to omit from this translation the poems which are scattered through the novel in the German. A few trifling changes in certain passages have been made necessary by this omission; and the translator has in two or three cases very slightly condensed the text.*

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IN PARADISE.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

It was a Sunday in the midsummer of 1869.

The air, cleared by a thunderstorm the night before, was still tremulous with that soft, invigorating warmth which, farther south, makes breathing such an easy matter, but which, north of the Alps, seldom outlasts the early morning. And yet the bells, that sounded from the Munich Frauenkirche far across the Theresienwiese, and the field where stands the great statue of Bavaria, were already ringing for high mass. Here, outside the city, there seemed to be no human ear to listen. The great bronze maiden stood there in the deepest solitude, holding her wreath above her head, and with a mazed and dreamy look, as though she might be thinking whether this were not an opportune moment to step down from her granite pedestal, and to wander at will through the town, that to-day raised its towers and roofs like a city of the dead above the bare green plain. Now and then a bird flew out of the little grove behind the Ruhmes-halle, and fluttered about the shoulders of the giant maiden, or rested for a moment on the mane of the lion that sat

lazily listening, pressed close to the knee of his great mistress. But away in the city the bells rang on. The air grew drowsy with the steadily increasing heat, with the hum and the vibration of the distant ringing, and the strong fragrance that rose from the meadow, which had been mown the day before. At last the bells ceased ; and now not a sound was to be heard, save that there came from a house in one of the outer streets the sound of a flute, played by fits and starts, as though the player stopped for breath between the passages, or as though he forgot his notes in other thoughts.

The window, from which this singular music sounded into the summer air, opened from the upper story of a house that stood some distance back from the street—a house of a kind of which there are many in this western suburb. They are generally entirely unornamented, box-like buildings, windowless except on the northern side, and there pierced by great quadrangular openings, supplied with all manner of arrangements for admitting the steadiest possible light from above. In summer one never sees above them the little cloud of smoke that betrays a domestic hearth, and no profane smell of cooking meets the visitor upon the threshold—as in most other Munich houses. From the open windows floats only a light, invisible odor of tobacco-smoke, agreeably mingled with the invigorating fragrance of varnishes, oils, and turpentine—which shows that here only the holy fire of art is fed, and that here, upon silent altars (three-legged easels and sculptors' pedestals) are offered sacrifices that cannot even shelter the priests that offer them from the pangs of hunger.

The house of which we speak turned its windowless southern side toward a little yard, in which lay scattered

marble and sandstone blocks of different sizes. The four studio-windows of the northern side looked into a carefully-tended, narrow garden, that sheltered them from all disagreeable reflected lights. Around a little, slender, drowsily-splashing fountain in the middle bloomed a glorious wealth of roses; and the neighboring flower-beds, filled with all kinds of garden-stuff, were enclosed in thick borders of mignonette. Here the smell of oil and turpentine just referred to could not penetrate, especially as only the two upper studios were those of painters; while in the lower story, as could be seen by the blocks of stone in the yard, a sculptor carried on his art.

Artists—enjoying, as they do, a perpetual holiday mood over their work—are not wont to be supporters of a regular celebration of the Sabbath. Those who are so must be such as in the course of years have come to devote themselves—as not a few do in a so-called “art-city”—to the mere business-like manufacture of pictures for “art-clubs,” or of parlor statuettes; and so are privileged to take their rest on the seventh day, among the other customs of solid citizens. They, “thank God, no longer feel obliged” to be industrious, and to work even on a holiday.

But the dwellers in this little house were not of such a type.

On the ground-floor all possible panes in the windows had been opened, to let as much as possible of the glowing air stream into the sunless room; and perhaps, too, to tempt in the fragrance of the flowers, or the notes of the flute that sounded from the window overhead. A flock of sparrows, that seemed accustomed to make themselves at home in the place, availed themselves of the opportunity to whirr in and out of the garden, to flutter, chattering and scolding, about among the ivy-vines with which

one wall of the studio was thickly covered, and to hunt through every corner for neglected crusts of bread. With all this, however, they seemed well-bred enough to make no other trouble but their noise—though the busts and clay models, that stood about the room on boards and scaffoldings, showed many traces of their visits. On the damp cloth, in which a large group that stood in the middle of the great room was carefully wrapped, in order to keep the fresh clay from drying, sat an old and rather decrepit-looking sparrow, who still looked about him with an air of considerable dignity—evidently the chief of this wild army, to whom the pleasant coolness of his seat seemed to make it an agreeable one. He took no part in the fluttering and chatter of the younger company, but fixed his attention with critical gravity upon the artist in the gray blouse, who had moved his modeling-table close to the window, and was busy in finishing from a living model the statue of a dancing Bacchante.

The model was a young girl, hardly eighteen years old, who stood on a little platform opposite the sculptor, and, with her arms thrown up and backward, held fast by a rod that hung from the ceiling—for the statue held a tambourine in the hands flung upward with such *abandon*, and the *pose* was none of the most comfortable. Still, the girl had borne it a good half hour already without complaining or asking for a rest. Although she had to hold her head far back, with its loosened auburn hair that fell below her waist, yet she followed with intense curiosity—her little eyes almost closed the while, so that the long golden-blond lashes lay upon her cheeks—every movement of the artist, every one of his critical and comparing glances. It seemed to flatter her beyond measure that her youthful beauty should be the subject of such conscientious study ;

and in this satisfaction to her vanity she forgot fatigue. And indeed she was of unusually slender and graceful form ; and from the rough brown calico dress that was tightly fastened about her waist there sprung, like a fair flower from a coarse husk, a girlish figure of as perfect whiteness and delicacy as though the poor child had no other occupation but to care for her complexion. Her face was not exactly beautiful ; a rather flat nose with broad nostrils projected above the large, half-opened mouth. But in the ill-formed jaws, that gave to the face something wild and almost like an animal, shone perfect and beautiful teeth ; and a merry, innocent, childlike smile enlivened the full lips and the otherwise rather expressionless eyes. The complexion of her face, too, was of a brilliant, transparent white, spotted here and there by a few little freckles, of which there were two or three also on her neck and breast. It was comical to see how she herself shared in the study of her own beauty, as she found such serious attention given to it by another ; and, as she saw her girlish self treated with such respect, she seemed to forget every trace of anything like coquetry, such as might otherwise have entered into the matter.

“You must be tired, Zenz,” said the sculptor. “Don’t you want to rest awhile ?”

She shook her auburn hair with a laugh. “It is so cool here,” she answered without stirring. “You don’t feel your own weight at all in the open air like this—and besides, there’s the sweet smell of the mignonette in the garden. I believe I could stand this way till night.”

“So much the better. I was just going to ask you if you were not cold, and didn’t want a shawl over your shoulders. I don’t need them now ; I am just doing the arms.”

He went seriously and quietly on with his work. In his plain face, framed in smooth blond hair streaked with gray, the only features that struck one at first glance were the eyes, that shone with an unusual force and fire. When he fixed them upon a certain point, it seemed as though they took complete possession of what they saw, and made themselves completely master of it. And yet there could be nothing more quiet or less inquiring in expression than these same eyes.

"Who is that playing the flute up stairs?" asked the girl. "The first time I was here, a week ago to-day, it was perfectly still up there; but to-day it goes tramp, tramp, every few minutes, and somebody plays, and then it stops again for a little while."

"A friend of mine has his studio just over us," answered the sculptor; "a battle-painter, Herr Rosenbusch. If he can't make his work go to please him, he takes up his flute and walks up and down like that, and plays, and buries himself in thought. And then he stops in front of his easel and looks at his picture; and so goes on until he hits upon what he is after. But what are you laughing at, Zenz?"

"Only at his name. Rosenbusch!¹ And paints battles!—Is he a Jew?"

"I don't think so. But now if you want to rest a little while—your neck must be perfectly stiff by this time."

She let go the rod at once, and sprang down from the bench. While he was polishing with his modeling-tool the portion he had just finished, she stood close by him, her arms crossed behind her with a lightness peculiar to her figure, and looked closely at the beautiful statue, which

¹ Rosebush.

within the last hour had made such obvious progress. But only in the upper half ; for the active hips and limbs of the dancer, only hidden by her long, flowing hair, were only very roughly outlined.

“Are you satisfied, child ?” asked the artist. “But then I can only, at the best, work it out in marble for you, and you are really a better bit for a painter. That snow-white skin and flaming mane of yours—if you had lived two thousand years ago, when they made statues of gold and ivory, you would have been just in your proper place.”

“Gold and ivory ?” she repeated, thoughtfully. “Those must have been rich people ! However, I am satisfied for my part with the beautiful white marble—like the young gentleman there behind, that you didn’t finish.”

“Do you like him ? It was a long while ago that I began that bust. Isn’t it fine, how the small, firm, round head springs from the broad shoulders ? It’s a pity that I only sketched out the face ; you would have liked that too.”

“Are you going to make my portrait too, there in the clay ? I mean, so that it will be just like me—so that my friends will say at once ‘That is Red Zenz ?’”

“That depends. I could use your little nose and your small, sharp-cut ears well enough. But you know, child, I had quite another wish ; and, if you will fulfill that, I’ll make the face so that no human being will ever dream that Red Zenz was my model. Have you thought it over—what I asked you a week ago ?”

He did not look at her as he spoke, but kept on diligently smoothing and kneading the soft clay.

She made as though she had not heard his question, and turned on her heel, wrapping her thick hair about her

like a cloak, and went over to a corner of the studio, where a great black Newfoundland dog, with a white breast, was lying on a straw mat with his head between his fore paws, and growling lightly in his sleep. The girl bent down to him and began to scratch his head softly—of which he took no other notice than an instant's opening of his eyes, dim with old age.

“He isn't very gallant,” said the girl, laughing. “One of my girl friends has a little terrier, and when I stroke him he is perfectly wild with joy, and I have to look out that he doesn't lick my face and neck and hands all over with his little pink tongue. But this fellow is as reverend as a grandfather. What is his name?”

“Homo.”

“Homo? What a qucer name! What does it mean?”

“It is Latin, and means ‘man.’ Years ago the old boy showed so much human reason, just as his master seemed on the point of losing *his* head, that it was decided to re-christen him. Since then he has never brought shame upon his name. So you see, child, in what good company you are. If I am hardly as old as a grandfather yet, I am almost old enough to be your father. And I thought these two sittings would have convinced you that you were perfectly safe with me—that I shall faithfully keep what I promised you. And that is the reason—”

“No, no, no, no!” cried she, jumping suddenly up and whirling around, and shaking her head so violently that her hair flew about her like a wheel of fire. “What makes you speak of that again, Herr Jansen? You take me for a silly, thoughtless kind of girl, no doubt—and think that in time I shan't be able to refuse you anything. But you are very much mistaken. It is true, I don't mind doing some foolish things; and standing about for you

here like this doesn't seem to me anything wrong or dis graceful. Why, at a ball last winter where we had made up the flowers, and so they let us look in through the dressing-room, the fine ladies appeared before gentlemen in a very different way from the way I am standing and walking about here ; and there were a great many officers there—not even artists, like you, that only look artistically at a bare neck and shoulders. But, if I will do *that* for you, you mustn't ask anything more. It is true, my friend, when I told her, did not think anything of it—and she could come with me. But that is decided—it would make me so that I never could look anybody straight in the face again. No—no—no ! I will not do it—now or ever ! ”

“ You are right, child,” interrupted the sculptor, breaking in on her excited words and, suddenly changing the form of his speech into the more familiar “ thou.” “ Nobody need know of it, and, if it is disagreeable to you, I will not speak of it again. And yet—it's a pity ! I could make the figure from a single mould, so to speak ; and in half the time that I shall have to spend now in looking about for something that will suit.”

She made no answer, but of her own accord mounted upon the bench, and leaned back again, hanging from the rod.

“ Is that right ? ” she asked. “ Am I standing just as I did before ? ”

He only nodded, without looking up at her.

“ What makes you cross with me ? ” she asked, after a while. “ I cannot help it because I am not like my friend. To be sure, she has had a great deal more experience than I. And then she has been in love more than once.”

“ Have you never had a sweetheart, Zenz ? ”

“ No ; a real sweetheart, such as one would go through

the fire for—never! My red hair didn't have very good fortune out in Salzburg, where I have generally lived. And, besides, I was too ugly. One of them said I had a dog's face. It has only been within the last year, when I have suddenly shot up a little, and grown a little stouter, that the gentlemen have sometimes run after me; and with one of them—a right nice young fellow—I had a kind of a flirtation. But he was so silly that he tired me; and so it hadn't gone far between us when one fine day he fell sick and died. And it was only then that I found I couldn't have loved him so very, very much; for I didn't even cry about him. Since then I have taken good care not to make a fool of myself again. Men are bad; everybody says that that knows anything. As for me, if I liked one—if I really liked him, 'von Herzen, mit Schmerzen'—"

"Well, Zenz, what would you do?"

She was silent for a moment, and then suddenly let her arms fall close by her sides. It seemed as though a chill ran over her soft skin; she shook herself, and shrugged her white shoulders.

"What would I do?" she repeated, as though to herself. "Everything he wanted! And so it is better as it is—much better."

"You are a good girl, Zenz," he muttered, nodding his head slowly. "Come, there is my hand; shake hands, and I promise you now that there never shall be a word again between us of what you are not willing to hear."

CHAPTER II.

SHE was just about to lay her round, white little hand in his, which was rough and muddy from kneading the clay, when a knock at the door caused them both to look up and listen.

The janitor called out through the key-hole that a strange gentleman wished to speak with Herr Jansen. When he heard that the sculptor had a model sitting to him at the moment, he had asked the janitor to take in his card. With this the janitor pushed the card through a narrow hole in the door made for the purpose.

The sculptor, grumbling, went toward the threshold and picked up the card. "Felix, Freiherr von Weiblingen." He shook his head thoughtfully. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of joy. Under the printed name was written, with a pencil, "Icarus."

"A good friend of yours?" queried the girl.

He made no answer, but threw down his modeling-tool hastily, hurriedly wiped his hands on a towel, and hastened to the door again. As he opened it, he turned around.

"Stay here, Zenz," he said. "Amuse yourself for a while; there is a book of pictures; and, if you should be hungry, you will find something in the cupboard. I will lock the door behind me."

In the hall outside there was no one but the janitor, with his bent, long-shaped head, that looked very much like the head of a horse, especially when he spoke; then he moved his under-jaw, as though he had a bit between his great, yellow teeth.

He was a most serviceable old fellow, who had grown gray in the service of art, and had a more delicate judgment than many a professor. He was a thorough expert in preparing a canvas ; and occupied his leisure in studying the chemistry of colors.

"Where are the gentlemen, Fridolin?" asked the sculptor.

"There is only one. He is walking in the yard. A very handsome young gentleman. You can see in his face the look of the 'Baron' that is on his card. He said—"

But the sculptor had hurried by him, and had rushed down the steps that led into the yard. "Felix!" he cried, "is it you or your ghost?"

"I am inclined to think it is both, and a heart in addition," replied the person addressed, grasping the hand that the sculptor held out to him. "Come, old fellow, I can't see why we should be ashamed to fall on each other's necks, here under God's free heaven. I have had to get on for years without my best and dearest old Dædalus—"

He did not finish his sentence. The sculptor had pressed him so heartily to his breast that it fairly took away his breath.

Then suddenly he loosened his grasp, and, stepping back a pace, cast a critical glance over the slight figure of his friend.

"Still just the same," he said, as though to himself ; "but we must get those Samson-like locks under the shears. You don't know your strongest point, my dear boy, when you bury your round head in such a thicket. And your full beard must come off. However, all that will come with time. Tell me what has conjured you forth out of your primeval forests into our tame art-city?"

.

He grasped the young man's arm, and led him around the house into the little garden. Both were silent, and seemed to avoid looking at one another, as though they had begun to feel ashamed of the extravagant affection with which they had marked their reunion.

At the extreme end of the garden was an arbor overgrown with honeysuckle; at its entrance stood sentry two potbellied Cupids in the *rococco* style, with little queues and all that—both of them painted sky-blue from head to foot.

"It's easy to see whom one is visiting," said Felix, laughing. "'His pig-tail hangs behind him,' or have you had it cut off?" Then, without waiting for an answer: "But tell me, old fellow, how have you had the heart to leave your poor Icarus all these terribly long years without a sign of life on your part? Haven't any of the six or eight letters I have written you—the last only a year ago from Chicago—"

The sculptor had turned away and buried his face in a bunch of full-blown roses. He turned suddenly toward his friend, and said, with a quick, lowering glance: "A sign of life! How do you know that I *have* lived these terribly long years? But let us drop all that. Come and sit down here in the arbor, and now unpack your budget. A circumnavigator like you must have brought all manner of things with you that are entertaining and wonderful to dusty stay-at-homes like us. When you went away from Kiel, we did not either of us think the earth would turn so often before we looked each other in the face again."

"What shall I tell you?" asked the young man, and his delicate brow contracted. "If my letters reached you, you have not lost the thread of my story. As for all the

details that belong to it, you knew me well enough in my first university days, in those old times at Kiel, to imagine how I went on afterward in Heidelberg and Leipsic, till I got an older head under my corps-student's cap. It is true, I soon grew tired of the ridiculous corps business ; but, for the mere sake of not seeming to play the renegade, I kept on with the old associations even more shamelessly than before. My three years passed away, and a fourth beside ; I was fully three-and-twenty when I went back into my dear, dull, little home, and passed my examination to enter the civil service. How I managed to get on so long without giving you a call, Heaven knows ! As early as the second year after our separation, I was very near you. I had a trifling reminder of a pistol-duel with a Russian, here in my left shoulder, and had to go to a watering-place for my health. In Heligoland I heard that you had moved to Hamburg. I needn't say that I designed to call upon you on my way back. But, suddenly, a sad message called me home abruptly. My poor old father had had an apoplectic stroke, and I found him dead. Then there was all the dreary necessary business, and, after it all—. But why must we spoil our first pleasant hour with all these old stories ? My dear Hans, if you had a notion how good it is to be sitting here again by your side, to smell these roses, and imagine that my life is beginning all over again—a new life in a better world, free from all fetters and—. But, by-the-way, you have married, I hear ? An actress, was it not ? Where did she come from ? I heard in Heligoland—”

The sculptor suddenly rose. “You find me as you left me,” he said, his face darkening quickly ; “what is past, let us let it rest. Come out of the arbor ; it is suffocatingly hot under those thick vines.”

He went toward the little fountain, held his hands under the slender stream, and passed them over his brow. Then, for the first time, he turned to Felix again. His face was once more composed and bright.

“And now tell me what has brought you here, and how long you are going to stay with me.”

“As long as you will have me—for ever and ever—in *infinitum* if you will !”

“You are joking. Don’t do that, my dear boy. I am so utterly alone here, in spite of a plenty of good comrades with whom I can share everything except my most intimate thoughts, that the thought of beginning our old life again seems far too happy to me to be only made a jest of.”

“But it is my most serious earnest, dear old Hans. I am going to stay here with you, if you have nothing against it, in your most intimate daily companionship ; and, if some day you strike your tent and wander away somewhere else, I will go too. In one word, I have put my whole past career behind me, and broken up all my old associations, so that I may begin, as I said, my whole life over again, and not be anything but what I care most to be—a free man ; not make myself anything but what I have always secretly longed to be, an artist, as good or as bad a one as mother Nature will let me.”

He poured forth these words hurriedly, and with downcast face, and as he talked drew a light circle in the nearest flower-bed with his cane. It was only after a pause, and when his friend made no reply, that he raised his eyes and met, with some embarrassment, the quiet gaze fixed upon him.

“You don’t seem quite able to accept this change in my life all at once, Hans ? Others besides you have had

the same feeling—the person most concerned in it, for instance. That I have become a conceited ass, and fancy that because I used to be extravagantly fond of modeling all manner of absurdities in clay, and cutting caricatures of my friends in meerschaum—this I hope you will not believe. But why I can't get beyond the condition of a dilettante, if I only am serious about it, and think of and do nothing else but study my A, B, C, under a good master—I beg of you, my dear Dædalus, don't pull such a disheartening face! Don't look so sadly at the lost youth—as I probably seem to you; or at least smile ironically, so as to rouse my anger and wound my *amour propre* a little! But by the eternal gods—what is there after all so horribly fatal in this decision? That it hasn't occurred to me till after twenty-seven years? That is bad, I admit, but not a proof that it is hopeless. Think of your own half-countryman, Asmus Carstens, or of—well, I won't give you a whole chapter of artists' biographies. And besides, when I am altogether independent and have burnt my ships behind me—”

He stopped again. His friend's silence seemed to check his utterance. For a time nothing was to be heard around them but the splashing of the little fountain, and from the window above them the notes of the battle-painter's flute, every little while dying dismally away.

Suddenly the sculptor stood still.

“And does your fiancée agree to this project?”

“My fiancée? What in the world puts that question into your head?”

“Because, although I never answered your letters, I remember them all very well. Is it possible that you too do not remember what you wrote me three years ago, under the seal of the deepest—”

“So I did do it then !” cried the young man with a short, abrupt laugh. “So I did chatter, did I? I assure you, my dear Hans, I was myself doubtful how far I had initiated you—you, the only one before whom I ever lifted even a corner of the veil from this veiled picture. After awhile—as you sent no congratulations—I began to persuade myself that I had kept a quiet tongue in my head, even with you ; and, in truth, that would have been the best thing to do. Then I should have escaped the full confession that it is hard enough for me to make—and after all, it is perfectly superfluous. For how shall I—who am no poet, and who am besides an interested party in the transaction—how shall I describe the persons concerned so that you will understand how it all came about—how it was partly the fault of both—and yet how both are innocent, after all ?

“But if you must have it, let it be so—as briefly as possible.

“I came back, then, to my native town, to pay the last honors to my good old father. You know what an unhomelike home I had always found it. The capital of a third-class Duodezstaat—thank your good star that you have no idea what it means. My father before me had suffered under the absurd despotism of this court-etiquette, this endlessly-branching, complicated, spun-out primeval jungle of dry genealogical trees—under these ridiculous traditions of a worm-eaten bureaucracy. He was a man of quite another type—a sturdy, stately country noble, of the most exclusive and most independent spirit ; and since the death of my mother—who could not of course withdraw herself so entirely from her family connections—he had lived on our own estate, altogether apart from ‘society.’ Then came his death ; and I—looked upon askance

even as a boy because of my likeness to my father, and almost given up as far as a career at court or in politics was concerned—I believe no cock would have crowed at it, if I had once for all acknowledged that I was my father's true heir in this respect also, and had forever turned my back on the spot where I was cradled. But, much as I felt inclined to do so, it fell out otherwise."

He put his hand into his pocket and took out a little memorandum-book. .

"You shall have the romance in an illustrated edition," he said, with a rather forced attempt at jesting. "See, it was this little person's fault that I thought for a while it was really my calling to be a useful citizen—chamberlain to his Highness—by and by master of the hunt—court marshal—heaven knows what all. Is not that a face that could persuade one of anything, and could turn a head that never sat very firmly? And that is only a commonplace photograph, and three years old; and besides, in these three years the wicked child has learned all manner of witches' arts; and the eyes that here in the photograph look so still and fixed—half curious, half timid, as if they were looking at a theatre-curtain that would not go up—I can tell you, my dear boy, they look into the world now with such a queenly confidence and dignity that it fairly—but that is no part of our present talk. And at that time, when the misfortune happened and I lost my heart to the child, the little thing was hardly more than a school-girl, just sixteen years old; and shy, silent and unformed as a young bird. We had known each other since we were children—she is some sort of a cousin, seventeen times removed—just as all good families with us are related in some way. I had not the least idea, however, of visiting her, until her uncle, with whom she lived—her

parents died when she was very young—until this jovial gentleman came to make me a visit of condolence. Of course I had to return it, and it was on this occasion that I first saw the slender, pale, large-eyed child, with her exquisite, tight-shut red lips and her ravishing, tiny little ears.

“Soon afterward I went away again, and only after a year had passed—after the infernal examination that I would not shirk, in spite of my freedom, lest it should seem as though I were afraid of it—only then, when she was seventeen years old, did I see her again. While I was away, a recollection of her had come back to me from time to time ; suddenly, in the midst of altogether different things, I had seen something flitting before me that resembled nothing but her slight and somewhat spare figure, about which there was one trait that always seemed to me especially charming—that though she was perhaps not quite tall enough, her little form was always so haughty and erect and so delicately and perfectly balanced on its slender pedestal. Sometimes, too, her eyes met me in a fairly ghost-like fashion, when I was among my comrades or alone out of doors. And yet I had never exchanged ten words with her.

“And now, when I found her again, a year older and suddenly developed into a young woman—no, Hans, you need not fear that I am shamelessly going to put our whole love-story at your mercy, here in the bright morning sunlight. Enough to say that it had fared much the same with her, as far as my worthy self was concerned, as with me in respect to her. We saw that we were meant for one another, as people say—without ever thinking how much is meant by the words.

“Well ! everything would have been well enough ; the

match seemed as *bien assortie* as could possibly have been wished even in such an aristocratic and cosmopolitan capital as ours. If we had only married at once, on the spur of the moment, we should have been just the people—she with her seventeen years, and I with my three or four-and-twenty—to be altogether suited to one another, and, as time went on, to so round off the very perceptible and serious corners and sharpnesses of our two temperaments, that finally it would have been a thoroughly happy marriage. But, unfortunately, Irene's mother had married at seventeen, and attributed her lifelong invalidism—for she was a delicate creature and always remained so—to this early marriage. When she died—still very young—she charged her husband solemnly that he should not let their only daughter marry before she was twenty; and the uncle, who afterward filled a father's place to my sweetheart, considered himself absolutely bound by this inherited pledge. I must wait patiently, therefore, for three whole years. And as he was a bachelor, and his niece had no chaperon to call upon but a former servant, I was required to pledge myself to avoid all companionship with my betrothed during this long probation, and only to carry on my courtship by letter; so that every temptation to seek to shorten the time of waiting might be put a stop to once for all.

“You can imagine what my feelings were when the old gentleman told me all this. To decree a three years' banishment just because we should give him trouble—because he hated responsibility, and because he believed, as an old hand at love-making, that this was the best way to protect lovers against themselves! But, jovial as his manner was, he was an uncompromising egotist where his own quiet and comfort were concerned. And I was too stub-

born and too proud to make any supplications, and too sure of myself and my sweetheart to fear the length of the interval ; which did not seem to me at first glance so intolerable as I often felt it afterward—in sighs and misery.

“My sweetheart, too, threw back her little head and said : ‘Yes, we will wait.’—Afterward, it is true, when it came to our last parting, she fell out of my arms as though she were dead, and I thought she would never open her eyes again. Even now I don’t know how I succeeded, in spite of it all, in tearing myself away.

“And this three years’ separation itself ! If I had only been a man of sense—that is, if I had been another than myself—I should have settled down somewhere in Germany, and taken up some task at which I could have worked myself tired—to fight down my unprofitable lover’s-melancholy. Why could not I devote my three years to making myself a perfect agriculturist, or a prominent jurist, or a politician, or something that is of some use in the world ? To make one’s self so completely master of some department of life or knowledge that one knows every square foot of it is rather an absurd and commonplace consolation, to be sure ; but it is better, after all, than an objectless activity, a love nourished on prison-fare, and a longing for freedom that at last makes one look upon mere change as something desirable.

“Even then I thought of my old Dædalus. I was on the very point of falling upon you in your studio, and, for want of a smooth, girlish cheek to caress, of trying my hand on a soft bit of clay. Just then I chanced upon an opportunity to go to England ; there I stayed until I was ripe for America ; and he who once sets foot in the New World, and hasn’t left any very pressing business behind him in

the Old, can get rid of a few years of his life without knowing exactly how he has done it. It is enough to tell you that I had already reached Rio, traveling by way of San Francisco and Mexico, when I said to myself one day that if I did not want to prolong my exile voluntarily, and so appear to my betrothed in rather a bad light, I must take the next steamer that sailed for Havre, in order to land at last, after all this wandering over the wide world, in the harbor of my wedded bliss.

"I had written regularly to my betrothed every month—beautiful diary-like love-letters—and had received with equal regularity letters from her, which, to speak honestly, had now and then irritated me greatly ; so that we had already had (on paper) all manner of misunderstandings, tiffs, quarrels, and reconciliations. I considered that all this belonged of right to a well-conducted three-years' engagement, and did not take it too much to heart when my well-bred, rather provincial little sweetheart, who had grown up in the atmosphere of the petty capital, occasionally gave her vagabond *fiancé* a little moral lesson. Perhaps I was wrong, and certainly I was foolish, always to report my varied adventures with absolute candor. There were no very serious matters among them ; and the few cases of real human weaknesses and sins I kept to myself—shut up in a sincerely remorseful heart. But she found fault even with the *tone* of my 'sketches from two hemispheres.' Good heavens ! it is easily comprehensible that the poor child, living as she did among such absurd surroundings, could not have much taste for a free life out in the world ! Thrown entirely on herself, watched over by a hundred eyes in a narrow, starched, formal society—I once wrote to her that she was only so serious beyond her years because she had had to fill, as it

were, a mother's place to herself, and be her own governess and duenna. And, besides all this, there was her uncle's frightful example—for she could not long remain ignorant of his habit of compensating himself for outward respectability by private orgies at his bachelor clubs and *petits soupers*.

“Only let the three years be over, I thought to myself, and we will soon weed out the tares that have sprung up between our roses. But I did not know the vigor of the ground in which all this bad crop had grown up. Nor did I know how much the years between seventeen and twenty signified in such a girl's life.

“At last, then, I arrived at home, and found—but, no!” He checked himself abruptly, and made a sharp cut at the air with his cane. “Why should I bore you with a detailed story of a domestic comedy that has only a decidedly unfavorable likeness to ‘Much Ado about Nothing,’ and, instead of ending with the reconciliation between Benedict and Beatrice, finished with a ridiculous eternal separation? For isn't it almost as laughable as lamentable that two lovers, who for three whole years, the world over, have been extravagantly fond of one another, should count the days till they could fall again on one another's necks, and then should not be able to get on together for six weeks? And all this only because—as old Goethe says—man strives for liberty, woman for morality; and because the said moral law seems to the man a wretched slavery, while the unhappy young woman thinks even a very moderate freedom immoral! Ah, my dear old Hans, what did I not endure in those six weeks!—and more especially because I was thoroughly dissatisfied with myself. After our altogether fruitless (and therefore all the more obstinate) discussions of these questions, in which

I poured out my bitterest scorn upon her court-etiquette, her kid-gloved prejudices, her duenna-like code of morals, while she put my baseless principles to shame with a maidenly pride and firmness that I could have kissed her for—always after these discussions I used to say to myself, in the quiet of my chamber, that I was a mad fool to upset matters as I did. With a little diplomacy, a little delicate tact, and patient hypocrisy, I could have thoroughly gained my end ; could have borne the stupid ban of society until my marriage ; and then, when we were alone together, could have gradually developed my little wife out of her doll-like state of servitude, and rejoiced to see her spread her wings in freedom.

“But it was odd : as often as I appeared before her with the best resolves in the world—the war began again. You must not imagine that she fairly entered the lists, challenged me, and herself brought up our old points of conflict. But it was precisely her quiet reserve, her obvious good intention to be cautious with the reckless scapegrace, and to leave his reform to time—it was all this that overthrew my finest diplomatic projects. I would begin to joke, then to chaff, then to hurl the most fearful insults against people and customs that seemed fairly holy to her—and so it went on, day after day, until there came one day that fairly ‘forced the bottom out of the cask’—a wretched, wretched day !”

He paused a moment, and fixed his eyes gloomily upon the ground.

“There’s no help for it !” he said, at last. “It must come out. Once in my life I did something that humiliated me in my own eyes. I committed a sin against my own sense of honor—a base act, for which I never can forgive myself, although a court of honor in matters of

gallantry—chosen from among my own equals, mind you—would probably have let me off with a slight penance, if not scot-free altogether. You know what I think of what is called sin ; there is no *absolute* moral code ; what brands one forever is only a little spot upon another—all according to the delicacy and sensitiveness of the skin. Even conscience is a product of culture, and the categorical imperative is a pure fiction. What a brutal blackguard of a soldier permits himself in plundering a captured town, and feels his conscience untroubled, would dishonor his officer to all eternity. But I am not going to theorize ; suffice it to say that that inner harmony with one's self, on which everything depends, was utterly destroyed in me by this act. From the way in which it haunted me, you can conceive how, in a moment of weakness, I confessed the whole story to Irene's uncle, little consolation as I could get from the absolution of so very odd a saint. I saw *how* little, when he utterly failed to understand how I could take the matter so to heart, especially as it had taken place a considerable time before my engagement. I instantly repented most bitterly that I had confided in him ; and his promise, never by a single syllable to recur to it, reassured me but little.

“I was right. He forgot it himself ; and one unhappy day he began, in the very presence of his niece—we had just been speaking of all manner of far more innocent adventures, and even these she would not let pass—he began to refer to that wretched story. Something must have come into my face that instantly gave my sweetheart an idea that this reference meant something beyond the common. Her uncle, too, began to stammer, and made a clumsy attempt to change the subject. That made the matter worse. Irene stopped talking, and soon

after left the room. The uncle, good-natured as usual, cursed his own loquacity again and again ; but, naturally, that did not help things. When I saw my little one again, she asked me to what his words referred. I was too proud to lie to her ; I confessed that I carried about with me the memory of something that I wished to conceal from myself—how much more from her ! With that she grew silent again. But on the evening of that day, when I was a second time alone with her, she told me that she must know the whole. I could not have done anything that she could not forgive me ; but she felt that she could not live by my side when there was such a secret between us.

“Perhaps a wiser man might have invented some story, and so have avoided a greater evil. There is such a thing as a necessary lie. But I held to the belief that every man is alone responsible for his acts ; that I should add a second sin to the first if I burdened the pure soul of my darling with such a confidence ; and so I remained unshaken, though I knew her too well not to know how much was at stake.

“On the next morning I received her parting letter—a letter that for the first time showed me all that I was losing.

“But I had gone too far to turn back. I answered that I would wait until she changed her opinions ; that in the mean time I should look upon myself as bound to her ; but she was, of course, entirely free.

“That was a week ago. I reflected that of course it would be necessary to leave at once those places where she might meet me. In putting my house in order for an indefinite absence, I came upon a package of visiting-cards in one of my mother’s cupboards that had on them

the name of her brother, my godfather, Felix von Weiblingen. It occurred to me as a good idea that, under this name, I might for a while (*incognito*) breathe the same air with my oldest friend, and at the same time attain the goal of my dearest wishes—to begin a new life. There is nothing in me of the ordinary numbered and classified type of ‘man with a calling,’ and, even with the best wife in the world, I never should have been able to busy myself quietly on my estate with bringing up children, making brandy, and fox-hunting. It is better, then, that I should use this involuntary opportunity to dispose of myself as I choose, in trying whether I can’t really make a life of my own. If in time she should bring herself to my way of thinking, she would then find a *fait accompli* that she would have to accept.

“It will be no shame to me in your eyes if I don’t at once find my spirits so entirely in order that I can go rushing into a mastery of the fine arts by lightning express. I have reached the door of your studio but slowly, and by very short stages—but this very slowness has done me good. You see before you a thoroughly sensible man, who is determined to submit to fate without a grumble. If you will only take me into training, it will not be long before the wings of your faithful Icarus will grow again, to lift him above all this wretched world of Philistinism and its foolish love-affairs.”

CHAPTER III.

THE sculptor had listened to this long confession in silence. And even now, when Felix ended, and began to pull to pieces a sprig of mignonette as carefully as though he were trying to count the stamens in the little blossoms, he betrayed neither by word nor look any opinion of what he had just heard.

"I find that you have made great progress in your old art of expressing yourself by silence," said the young man at length, with a somewhat forced lightness of tone. "Do you remember how I used to be able to tell from the degree, and, so to speak, from the *pitch* of your silence, just what you were thinking of my nonsense? I can tell in the same way now: you think my decision to become an artist is a mere absurdity. You used to tell me that I was not fit either for science or art—that I was an *homme d'action*. But there's no help for it now: if it is a wrong road—why, I am in it once for all and mean to follow it to the end. So speak out, and tell me candidly whether I must look up another master, or whether the lion will endure the company of the puppy in his cage—as he used to before he himself was a full-grown king of the desert?"

"What shall I say to you, my dear boy?" replied the sculptor, in his quiet, rather slow manner. "The thing is a matter of course. I need not say to you, well as you know me, that I can hardly base any very exalted hopes upon an art-apprentice who takes up his task somewhat as a man might marry a woman with whom he had not been especially in love, but who now, when his real sweetheart

has given him the mitten, is a good enough last resort ; that the future career of an art adopted thus out of spite, as it were, seems to me very doubtful. But then, too, I know *you* well enough to be sure that all the Phidiases and Michael Angelos in the world couldn't make you break your resolution, and that, if I should lock my door against you, you would be just the fellow to bind yourself out as an apprentice to the first of my colleagues you might chance upon. And then—to be honest—it is such a pleasure to me to have you back again at all, that out of pure selfishness I can't make any objection if your energy, instead of taking hold of real life, chooses to spend itself on a harmless bit of clay. For the rest—let us speak of it another time—or not at all, whichever pleases you better. In such matters we take no counsel, after all, but that of our own souls ; and if this isn't always the best for us—why, we are sovereigns of ourselves, and have it in our own power to save or ruin ourselves according to our natures. Here is my hand, then. You can begin to-morrow, if you like, your apprenticeship as a kneader of clay and chipper of stone—and your baronial ancestors can turn in their graves at it as they please.”

“Chaff away, dear old Hans !” cried the young man, joyously. “Now I'll stake my head that I will become a famous artist just to have the laugh on you ! I will work from morning till night with a true malicious pleasure, grinding and fretting till the dilettante skin is rubbed off and something better appears below it. And you shall see that I have not spent these seven years altogether in lounging. If you will run through my sketch-books from both continents—but *apropos*, what have *you* been doing in the mean while ? Is it not a shame that I haven't been able to keep track of your progress toward immortality,

even by a wretched photograph? And here I have been running on for an hour over my own adventures, while the most glorious wonders of the world are waiting for me over yonder!"

He strode quickly across the yard, to which they had come back while they were talking, and entered the house.

"You will repent this haste, rash boy!" Jansen called after him, while an odd smile played about his lips. "You will indeed wonder over much that you see—but the wonders of the world that you dream of—they are still in this narrow room" (he pointed to his forehead), "and even there they are not always in the best light!"

With these words he unlocked one of the two lower doors, and let Felix pass in.

It was a second studio, adjoining that in which he had worked during the morning; a room precisely like the other, its walls painted in the same stone-color, and its great square window half draped in the same fashion. And yet no one would have believed that the same spirit ruled here that had created the dancing Bacchante in the next atelier.

On slender pedestals stood a multitude of figures, most of them of half life-size, such as are used for the decoration of Catholic churches, chapels and cemeteries. Some of them were just begun, some were almost finished works; and in all could be clearly recognized the hands of the pupils who had their execution in charge—sometimes more and sometimes less skillfully imitating the little original models, barely six inches high, that stood on small shelves beside the copies. While the latter were neatly cut in sandstone or in the cheaper marbles—and a few in wood, decorated with all manner of painting and gilding—the little models were in plaster, and spotted and nicked by

constant use. Yet these doll-like little madonnas, saints and apostles, and praying and playing angels in their heavy draperies, had a certain odd and now and then almost caricatured life-likeness—so great that not all of its charm was lost, even in the dry copies made by the assistants. They had something of the same element of humor that Ariosto gives to his personages—which by no means lose in life or force because their author has lost his own simple faith in them.

“Allow me to ask,” said Felix, after looking about blankly for a moment, “into whose room you have brought me? And is your good friend who practises this pious art hidden somewhere close by, so that one must be cautious in his criticisms?”

“You needn’t be in the least disturbed, my dear fellow; the lord and master of this worshipful company stands before you.”

“You, yourself? Dædalus with a saint’s halo! The preacher in the wilderness of modern art actually at the foot of the cross! Before I believe that, I shall have to take the cowl myself, and declare poor naked Beauty to be an invention of the devil!”

The sculptor cast down his eyes for a moment.

“Yes, my dear fellow,” he said, “this is what we have come to in our art-desert. You ask me for beauty, and I offer you clothes-racks with dolls’-heads! As long ago as when we were in Kiel, I had to learn that the world of to-day will have nothing to do with true art. You know how hard I found it to turn these stones of mine into bread. It was still worse when I moved to Hamburg, and there—” he checked himself suddenly, and turned away; “well, living is more expensive there, and I began to be older and less easily satisfied; and, when I could

no longer support myself in the place—it was the wretched trading city's fault, I thought—I packed up my best models and sketches and came here, to the much-praised land of art, the 'Athens on the Iser,' of which so much is said and sung. You will soon learn how it is here. I won't begin as soon as you have crossed the threshold to sweep all the disagreeable things in the house out of the corners for you. I will only say that the Munich Philistine isn't a hair better than those on the Jungfernstieg or in our old Holstein. After I had managed, with great difficulty, to keep myself alive here for a year, and had hardly earned enough in the service of pure beauty to keep life in my body, I found that such misery was enough to make a man turn Catholic—and, as this spectacle shows, I did turn so, half-and-half. It wasn't so easy as it may seem to you here—to my shame! Besides a trace of conscience, which was always reminding me that

'Man, after all, has higher goals to seek
Than simply feeding seven times a week;'

besides my own humiliation before myself and a few of my good colleagues, I was hampered by a real lack of skill. It needs a good deal to take all the manliness out of one's self, so that one can fit himself to all the miserable complications, the twisted deformities and tameness of our modern civilization. But it only depends, after all, on one's capability of getting the humor out of the thing. The idea that I, an unmitigated pagan, should establish a manufactory of images of saints, struck me as so indescribably rich that one fine day I actually set to work to model a Saint Sebastian, in which task my knowledge of anatomy stood me in good stead. But, even here, I soon found that it is only 'clothes that make the man.'

It was only when I betook myself to making draperies, trains, and sleeves, that the result took on the true devotional air such as the public is accustomed to and desires. And, since then, I have grown prosperous so fast that now I employ eight or ten assistants ; and, if it goes on, I shall some day bid farewell to temporal affairs, in the odor of sanctity and as rich as ——.” (He named a colleague who enjoyed a continued rush of business.)

“Yes, my dear Icarus,” continued he, still more laughingly, as Felix made no reply to these revelations, “you would not have believed it all, I know, when in the first fire of youth we rode our proud hobbies, and called every man a low fool who, in art or life, proved faithless to his ideals by a straw’s breadth. But the mill of every-day life rubs off much that a man believed was bound to him as with iron—like a very part of himself. And here you have an example, worth your deep consideration, of that celebrated ‘liberty’ you think to find here. If I allow myself the liberty of doing what I cannot give up, I must, at the same time, make up my mind to work at absurdities with which my heart has no sympathy. In order to be an artist, such as I wish to be, I am compelled to make Nuremberg toys and to display them in the market-places. But, after all—behind my own back, as it were—I continue quietly to be my own master. Let thy troubled heart take courage, beloved son ! thy old Dædalus hasn’t even yet become quite so utterly bad as these trade-wares show him. I think you will give me back your esteem if I lead you now out of my holy into my profane *atelier*—out of my tailor’s-shop into my paradise !”

CHAPTER IV.

WITH these words he opened the little door that separated the two studios and passed in, followed by Felix.

"You will find an old acquaintance again," he said. "I wonder whether friend Homo still remembers you. He has certainly had time to grow old and dull."

The dog was still lying in front of the old sofa, on the straw mat, and seemed to have slept quietly on, although the girl had seated herself near him and had buried both feet in his thick coat as in a rug. Evidently the old dog thought it not disagreeable, but rather pleasant than otherwise, to be rubbed and trampled on by the little shoes. At all events he uttered a comfortable growl from time to time, like a purring cat.

To the girl herself the time had seemed very long. At first, when she heard voices out in the garden, she had climbed upon a chair close to the window, and, pulling her skirt over her bare shoulders that she might not be seen by any chance passer-by, had peeped out curiously through the roses. The strange young man, who spoke so long and seriously with Jansen, had taken her fancy greatly, with his tall, slender figure, his small head above the broad shoulders, and the fiery glance of his brown eyes, that wandered absently about. She had seen directly that he must be somebody of distinction. But, when he disappeared with Jansen into the arbor, her post at the window grew uncomfortable. She climbed slowly and thoughtfully down, stationed herself before a little looking-glass on the wall, and looked attentively at her own youthful figure, which only seemed to her anything especially remark-

able now that an artist copied from it. Only to-day she was even less satisfied than usual with her face, and tried whether it could not be improved if she screwed up her mouth as much as possible, drew in her nostrils, and opened her eyes very wide. She was vexed because she could not make herself as beautiful as the plaster-heads that stood above her on the brackets. But suddenly she had to laugh at the horribly distorted face she made ; her old high spirits came back ; she thrust out her tongue at her reflection in the glass, and was pleased to see how pretty and red it looked between her glittering white teeth. Then she shook her thick red hair and went singing, and patting her shoulders in time with the tune, up and down the room, so that the sparrows were frightened and fluttered out at the window. Then she stood still for a long while and looked at the casts and clay models around her on the walls ; and seemed especially interested in the half-finished marble bust. It reminded her again of the stranger outside in the arbor, whose head sprung just so from his stately shoulders. Finally she tired of this also ; and besides, she began to feel a little hungry. She found in the cupboard, behind her in the corner to which the sculptor had directed her, a few rolls and an opened bottle of red wine. There was all sorts of rubbish besides in the cupboard ; a masquerader's costume, pieces of gold-stamped leather tapestry, of blue and red silk and brocade, with large flowers in their patterns, and a saint's halo, cut out of paper and painted with beautiful golden rays—that might have done service for a *tableau vivant*, or some other profane purpose. The idle girl seized upon this last, fastened it on her head with the two ribbons still attached to it, and went again before the looking-glass, where she smiled and made faces at her own reflection.

Then she took a piece of blue damask out of the pile of things, and threw it like a cloak over her white shoulders. Her hair flowed freely over it, so that at a distance, when one did not see her uncovered neck, she looked like a mediæval madonna, who had stepped out of her frame and had wandered into some merry company. The girl thought herself very beautiful, and quite worthy of reverence in this disguise, and secretly congratulated herself on the surprise and admiration of the sculptor, when he should find her so dressed. That she might await his return more comfortably, she had seated herself on the sofa, put a glass of wine on a chair beside her, and begun to eat a roll. She had come across a portfolio of photographs of celebrated pictures, and had laid it open in her lap, resting her feet on the dog's back ; and so she had sat now a full half-hour, absorbed in looking at the pictures (which she found generally very ugly), when the little door opened and Jansen again entered the room.

At the same moment she started as though shot up by a spring—so rudely that the old dog, giving a low howl and shaking himself, also scrambled up from his sleep.

She had seen the young stranger enter behind the sculptor ; and now she stood in the middle of the atelier, drawing the little blue silk flag as tightly as she could across her breast, her eyes flaming with anger, and her whole body trembling with excitement.

"You need not be afraid, my child," said the sculptor, "this gentleman is also an artist. Good Heavens ! How magnificently you have dressed yourself ! The halo becomes you excellently. Turn round a little—"

She shook her head violently.

"Let me go ! I will never come again !" she said half

aloud. "You haven't kept your word to me! Oh! it is shameful!"

"But, Zenz—"

"No, never again! You have deceived me. You know very well what you promised me, and yet—"

"But if you would only listen! I assure you solemnly—"

Shaking her head and blushing crimson, she ran to the chair where she had laid her waist and her straw hat, seized them hurriedly, and shot like an arrow through the little side-door into the second studio.

The sculptor tried to follow her, but had to turn back at the bolted door. Vexed and annoyed, he turned again to Felix, who had let the girl pass almost unnoticed in the demonstrative recognition he received from the dog. The powerful animal had come leaping toward him with all the liveliness of his younger days, had rested his heavy paws on his old friend's breast, barking hoarsely the while, and seemed unwilling to let him go again.

"Do you really know me still, true old soul?" cried the young man, patting the dog's great head, and looking with real emotion into the faithful old fellow's large eyes, already grown a little dim.—"See, Hans, with what *empressement* he receives me! But what have I done to vex the little girl? Is it the custom here in your blessed land of free art for models to set themselves up as examples of propriety?"

"This is rather a peculiar case," answered Jansen, with some vexation. "It was only after long hesitation that she did me the favor to stand as a model at all; and I shall be hard put to it now to make the shy thing so tame again. She has neither father nor mother—at least, so she says. I used often to meet her on her way to an

artificial-flower factory, where she works hard to support herself. Her figure attracted me; and the little pert-nosed thing did not look as though her ideas were very rigidly conventional. But she would have nothing to say to it, although, as I look older than I am, I have made much shyer people trust me. Finally, though, my last resort helped me here, as it had before."

"Your last resort?"

"Yes; the remark that, after all, the matter really was not worth so much trouble as I had given to it; and perhaps, on the whole, she was wise in only wishing to show her figure with the aid of dress. This was too much for the vain little creature, and she consented to come as a model—but no one but myself must ever enter the studio. I thoughtlessly broke this agreement to-day in admitting you."

Felix stepped before the statue of the Bacchante.

"Unless you have greatly flattered her, you are to be congratulated on finding so good a one," he said. "And, as far as I have been able to see in to-day's wanderings through the town, you must have every reason to be satisfied with most of the figures you can find here."

Jansen did not answer. He seemed to be absorbed in gazing at his friend, who happened to be standing at the moment in a most favorable light. Then, muttering to himself, he went over to the cupboard in which the girl had been rummaging, searched a while in its compartments, and at last came back to Felix, hiding behind him a great pair of shears. The young man still stood absorbed in admiration of the Bacchante.

"Before we do anything else, my dear boy," said the sculptor, "you must allow me to crop this hair of yours into a more rational shape. Sit down there on that stool.

In less than five minutes we shall have it all arranged ; and that neck of yours, that looks like the neck of the Borghese Gladiator—the very best point about you—will be got out of all this thicket.”

At first Felix laughingly refused ; but finally he submitted ; and his friend’s skillful hand cropped his long hair, and trimmed his full beard more closely.

“There !” said Jansen. “Now a man needn’t be ashamed to be seen with you. And, as a reward for this submission, I will show you something that until now very few mortal eyes have had the privilege of seeing.”

He approached the great veiled group in the middle of the studio, and began cautiously to unwrap the damp cloths in which the work was everywhere enveloped.

The figure of a youth appeared, of more than mortal strength and stature, lying stretched upon the ground in an attitude of perfect and natural grace and beauty. Sleep seemed to have just left his eyes ; for he lay with his head a little raised, leaning upon his right arm, and passing the left across his forehead as though to clear away the mists of some deep dream. Before him—or behind him, as it appeared to the spectator—knelt upon one knee a youthful female figure, bending over him in a posture of innocent wonder. This figure was much less advanced toward completion than that of its male companion—there being, indeed, scarcely anything left to do on the latter excepting a little delicate work upon the luxuriant hair and the hands and feet. And yet, though the lines of the woman’s figure were still almost in the rough, and her beautiful form seemed only the fruit of a few days’ labor, the modeling of the whole was so broad and strong, the bend of the neck and the posture of the arms were so expressive, that no one could fail to catch the full

force of the whole, even from the unfinished work, and to see that the two figures were worthy of one another, and of equal birth.

Felix uttered an exclamation of delight. Then, for a full quarter of an hour, he stood motionless before the mighty group, and seemed altogether to forget the sculptor in his work.

At length the dog, which came beside him and began again to lick his hand, aroused him from his reverie.

"The old-time Hans still lives!" he cried, turning to Jansen. "And more than that—this is for the first time the complete, genuine Dædalus, who has thoroughly learned to use his wings. Listen, old boy; it is gradually dawning upon me that I must have been altogether mad and absurd when I introduced myself to you as a kind of fellow-artist!"

"You shall go to the art-club to-morrow, and gather new courage when you see some of your other colleagues," said Jansen, dryly. "However, I am glad the thing pleases you. You remember how I used to dwell on the germ of the idea of this work years ago. The First Man face to face with the First Woman—hardly daring as yet to actually touch the being who for the first time makes his human existence full and complete; while she—more mature already, as a woman is, and having had time while he slept to recover from her first surprise—feels herself drawn by a strange and joyful yearning to him who is to be her lord, and to call forth for the first time her true woman's nature. It is a subject that stirs one to the core; it touches all that is deep and sacred in a man's fancy; and yet it is not impossible to reproduce it with the means our art affords. I have made more than one study of it, and yet not satisfied myself. It was only this spring,

when I realized one day, to my horror, how this wretched business next door—this money-getting and trying to please priests and women—was threatening to demoralize me, that for three weeks I never set foot in my saint-factory, but locked myself in here and expanded my soul again with this work. I know that I am only doing it for myself and for a little group of true friends, as restless as I am. Where could I put such a thing as that nowadays? True Art is homeless and without a place to lay her head. A dancing Bacchante is sure to find a lover in some rich man who will put her in some niche in his *salon*, and think when he looks at her of the ballet-girls who have been his associates. But Adam and Eve, before their fall, in all their rude and vigorous strength, with the fragrance of the fresh earth lingering, as it were, about them—they are as useless for a decoration as they would be for the altar of a chapel. Even their heroic proportions would pass for brutal! But, after all, they are my old favorites; and, if they please me, to whom does it matter?"

Felix did not answer. He was again absorbed in gazing at the group.

"A good friend of mine, whose acquaintance you will soon make, by the way," continued the sculptor, "one Schnetz, who likes to play the Thersites, advised me to put a fusilier's uniform on Adam, and make Eve into a sister of charity, with a medicine-glass and spoon in her hand. Then the group would perhaps be adopted to ornament the pediment of some hospital. His satire on the present condition of our art was so true that I had almost a mind to try it for a joke. My first man and woman, without an inkling of all the ills of our pestilential century, enthroned over the door of a *lazaretto*—what do you say to that as a piece of colossal humor?"

“Only finish it, Hans!” cried the younger man. “Dream out your dream, and I will vouch for it that, however stupidly and sleepily men are plodding on, this lightning-stroke of genius will dash the scales from their eyes! Why haven’t you made more progress with your Eve?”

“Because I have never yet found a model; and because I will not botch my work by mere patching together of my own recollections, or by the last resort of borrowing from the Venus of Milo. Ah, my dear fellow—the fine figures you think you saw in the streets to-day—psha! you’ll soon think otherwise. The German corset-makers, the school-room benches, and the miserable food we live on, may possibly leave enough of dear old Nature for me to make a laughing-doll out of, like my dancer there; but a future mother of mankind, untouched as yet by any breath of want or degradation, and fresh from the hand of her Creator—what do you think our professional models would say to that—or the seamstresses or flower-girls that money or persuasion can induce to enter the service of art? If it were a Roman, now, or a Greek, or any untamed child of Nature who had grown up under a happier heaven than ours! And that is what makes the ground here fairly burn under my feet—and if they were not fettered with leaden fetters—”

He suddenly checked himself, and a dark shadow passed across his face; but Felix shrunk from the effort to draw from him by a question any confidence beyond what Jansen offered willingly.

At this moment the clock in a neighboring tower struck twelve; and for a few moments the bells for mid-day service filled the pause that had interrupted the talk of the two friends.

The sculptor began to wrap up the group again, after

he had given it a thorough sprinkling. And then, while Felix examined in silence the other sculptures, many of which were familiar, he went to a wash-stand in a corner, where he washed the traces of the clay from his hands and face, and exchanged his working-blouse for a light summer-coat.

“And now,” said he, as he finished his toilette—“now you shall go with me to our high mass—one that we never miss on Sundays. At the stroke of twelve we working-bees forsake our hives, and swarm to that great flower-garden, the Pinakothek, to gather our store of wax and honey for the whole week. Do you hear the door slam above us? That is my neighbor in the upper story—a right good fellow, by the name of Maximilian Rosenbusch, but called ‘Rosebud’ for short by his friends. An excellent youngster, not in the least cut out by Nature for a desperado—but rather inclined, on the contrary, to all the more delicate pursuits of the muses. He is suspected of being secretly engaged on a volume of ‘Poems to Spring,’ and you could have heard his flute up-stairs an hour ago. But at the same time he paints the most tremendous battle-pieces—generally in Wallenstein or Swedish costume—battles of the bloodiest sort, and where there is no quarter. In the studio next to his lives a Fräulein, a thoroughly estimable woman, and by no means a despicable artist. Among her friends she goes by the name of Angelica, but her real name is Minna Engelken. This good creature—but there they come now down the stairs. You can make their acquaintance at once.”

CHAPTER V.

It was certainly an odd pair that they found waiting in the yard. The battle-painter, an animated young fellow, with a clear, bright, rosy complexion, wore an enormous gray felt hat, with a small cock's-feather in the band; and an abundant red beard, that looked as queerly against his pink-and-white face as though a girl had tied a false beard round her chin, in the attempt to disguise herself as a brigand. Looking at the face closely, there was a decidedly spirited and manly look in the clear blue eyes, while a merry laugh lurked constantly about the mobile mouth. Beside him, his companion—though she was apparently still under thirty—seemed almost as though she might be his mother, there was such a weighty seriousness and prompt decision in her movements. She had one of those faces in which one never sees whether they are pretty or ugly; her mouth was a little large, perhaps; her eyes were bright and full of life, and her figure was rather short and thickset. She wore her hair cut short under a simple Leghorn hat; but in the rest of her dress there was nothing especially conspicuous.

Jansen introduced Felix, and a few commonplaces were exchanged. After her first glance at him, Angelica whispered something to the sculptor that evidently related to the stately figure of his friend, and its likeness to the bust she had seen in his studio. Then all four strolled along the Schwanthalerstrasse, followed by the dog, which kept close behind Felix, and from time to time rubbed its nose against his hand.

They stopped before a pretty one-story house in the

suburb, standing in the middle of a neatly-kept garden. Rosenbusch took his flute out of his pocket, and played the beginning of the air "Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen." But nothing stirred in the house, although the upper windows were only closed with blinds, and every note rang out far and clear in the hot noonday air.

"Fat Rossel is either asleep or else he pretends he is, so as to shirk our high mass again," said the painter, putting up his flute. "I think we had better go on."

"*Andiamo!*" said Angelica, nodding. (She had once passed a year in Italy, and certain everyday Italian phrases had a way of slipping involuntarily from her lips every minute or two.)

The conversation, as they strolled on, was not exactly animated. Jansen seemed to be lost in thought; long silences were a habit of his, and, especially when there were several people about him, he could remain for hours apparently without the least interest in what was going on. And then, if something that was said happened to kindle a spark in him, his eloquence seemed all the more surprising. Felix knew him well, and made no attempt to disturb his abstracted mood. He looked about him as he walked, and tried to recognize the streets that he had first strolled through, long before, in one of his vacation journeys. Nor did Rosenbusch seem to be in a particularly talkative frame of mind; and only Angelica, who had a way of assuming a certain chaffing tone toward him, and besides was out of humor because, as she said, she had got "into a blind alley" with one of her pictures, kept up a fire of little sarcasms and ridicule against her neighbor. She even adopted the familiarity of calling him by his nickname, but not without putting a "Herr" before it.

"Do you know, Herr Rosebud, when you're composing a picture, you ought to repeat your poems instead of playing the flute? I know it would inspire you a great deal more, and your neighbors would suffer less. Now, to-day, for instance, I put some carmine on a whole group of children I was painting, and spoiled it, just because that everlasting *adagio* of yours had made me so sentimental."

"Why didn't you pound on the door, then, my honored friend, as we agreed, and then I would have 'ceased my cruel sport?'"

"If it hadn't been Sunday, and I hadn't said to myself it will soon be twelve o'clock, and then he'll stop anyhow—. But see that sweet little girl in the carriage—the one with the blue hat, next to the young man—it's a bridal couple, surely! What eyes she has! And how she laughs, and throws herself back in the carriage like a thoughtless child!"

She had stopped in the street in her ecstasy, and impulsively imitated the gesture of the girl who was driving by, bending back and crossing her arms behind her head. The friends stood still and laughed.

"I must beg of you, Angelica, calm your enthusiasm," growled Rosenbusch; "you forget that not only God and your artistic friends are looking at you, but profane eyes also, that can't imagine what you are driving at with your rather reckless studies of posture."

"You are right," said the little painter, casting a scared glance about her, but somewhat relieved to find that the street was deserted. "It's a silly habit of mine, that I have fought against from a child. My parents gave up taking me to the theatre because they said I always went through too many contortions over what I

saw. But, when anything excites me, I always forget my best resolutions to maintain my composure and dignity. When you come to see my studio, baron," she said, turning to Felix, "I hope you will bear me witness that I know how to keep within bounds on canvas at least."

"It is comical," she continued, as no one answered, "what singular neighbors we are. Here Rosebud, who looks so gentle and innocent, as if he could not kill a fly, wades ankle-deep in blood every day, and isn't happy unless, like a new Hotspur, he can kill at least fourteen Pappenheimer cuirassiers with oil in a morning. And I—whose best friends have to confess that the Graces didn't stand beside my cradle—I bother myself over fragrant flower-pieces and laughing children's faces, and then read in the reviews that I should do well to take up subjects that have more body to them!"

So she ran on for a while, without sparing herself or her companions in her jokes—yet without the least rudeness or old-maidish bitterness in her talk. A certain element of womanly coquetry showed now and then in her frank, honest speeches—an attempt to caricature herself and her faults and follies, so that she might be taken, after all, at a little higher value than her own exaggerations gave her credit for. But even this was done so good-naturedly that any gallant speeches that her companions might try to make were generally smothered in laughter. Felix was greatly attracted by her cleverness and droll good-humor; and, as he showed clearly how they amused him, her mood grew all the merrier, and one jest followed another so that the long walk seemed very short to all of them, and they stood at the door of the Pinakothek before they realized that they had come so far.

"And here, Baron, we must bid one another good-by

for the present," said the painter. "You must know that in this art-temple of ours we behave like good Catholics in their churches. Each kneels before a different altar; I before St. Huysum and Rachel Ruysch; Herr Rosebud before his Wouvermans; Herr Jansen before Saints Peter and Paul; and Homo stays outside, in silent converse with the stone lions on the steps. I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you in my studio. Don't let yourself be alarmed by these two malicious gentlemen with the idea that I shall try to capture you for a sitter. I must paint your portrait some time, of course—it is a fate you cannot escape; but my brush is by no means so presumptuous as these wicked men will try to represent it. When you are a little more at home among us, perhaps; but now—good-by!"

She nodded to the others, and disappeared into a side hall, into which Rosenbusch also retreated, after a short stay among the old German masters.

"We don't enforce this separation very rigidly, of course," said Jansen, smiling. "But we have found out that when we all go together we cannot bring ourselves into a really proper mood for study; we neither learn nor enjoy. At best, we only get into a discussion of technical points—problems of color and secrets of the palette, which are especially unimportant to me, as I make no use of that kind of thing."

"But why do not you prefer to hold your Sunday solemnities before the Medusa or the Barberini Faun?" said Felix.

"Because I know the Glyptothek by heart. And besides, I do not believe that what we ought to look at in the works of the great masters is the purely artistic side, if we want to profit by their study. Every one who has

passed his apprenticeship has his own ideas and prejudices and obstinacies on those points. What we ought to get from them are characteristics ; force, refinement, and contempt for small means used to small ends. But these I can learn just as well from a symphony of Beethoven as from a noble building—from a gallery of paintings as from a tragedy of Shakespeare ; and then next day I can turn them to account in my own work. And it is just these things that Rubens gives me better than any other here—Rubens, whose works fill this whole room. As soon as I come near him, he makes me forget all the photographic pettiness, the fashionable rubbish and ‘art-association’ absurdities of our own day.”

“Tell me yourself,” he continued, pointing to the walls of the Rubens room, “do not you too feel as though you were in your tropical wildernesses again, where Nature hardly knows how to restrain her overflowing vigor, and where all that moves or grows seems fairly intoxicated with its own abounding strength? Here, no one dreams that there is an everyday, prosaic life outside, that presses all created things into its service—men serving the State, women mere family beasts of burden, horses harnessed to the plough—and only suffers untamed animals to exist in its midst when they are on show in zoölogical gardens or fair-booths. Here the whole glorious creation swarms unadorned and vigorous as on the seventh day after chaos ; and all that we conceal and pamper in our dapper civilization appears here in all innocence in the open light of day. Look at this brown, lusty peasant and this beautiful woman—these sleeping nymphs watched by the satyrs—this glorious throng of the blessed and the damned—all this unveiled humanity is living and acting for itself alone, and never dreams whether prudish and pedantic fools are

looking on and taking umbrage at it. You know that nothing is really good or bad *in itself*; it is only the power of thinking about it that makes it so. And these creatures have never troubled themselves with thinking. They are enjoying life fully and overflowing—like the fat little satyr's wife above there, nursing her twins—or they are absorbed in the sharp struggle for existence. Look at this lion-hunt! Horace Vernet, who wielded no unskillful brush, has painted one too. But just there you can see the contrast between great art and petty art. Here everything is mingled in a raging turmoil, so that there is not a hand's breadth between—here is the very instant of highest conflict, the climax of struggle and defense, fury and death—every muscle strained to its utmost, and everything in such deadly yet triumphant earnest that one trembles and yet is filled with the spirit of victory. For all true strength is full of a certain triumphant joy. But the French picture is like a tableau in a circus, where, in spite of all the grimacing and posturing, there is no real struggle *à l'outrance*. And look at the purely artistic side; here all the outlines are so melted into one another, so lost in each other in spite of the strongest contrasts, that they necessarily lead the eye into a network from which it cannot escape, where it never has an opportunity to wish for anything else, or indeed to think that anything else is possible. A skillful modern artist, going to work with his patchwork of knowledge on the various subjects, could not possibly produce such a work. You will always find holes and gaps—stiff triangles and hexagons between the legs of the horses, and the figures kept apart as nicely and neatly as though they were going to be packed up in their cases again after it was all over."

He stood a good half hour before the lion-hunt, looking at it as though for the first time. And then, as though tearing himself away with difficulty, he took Felix by the arm and said, "You know I am no mere fanatical *doctrinaire*. Nobody can have more respect for the other great artists of the golden age. But still it always seems to me as though I did not find, even in the greatest and most immortal of them, a true balance between art and Nature. There is always an excess of technical aim over unaffected seeing and feeling—an excess of 'can' over 'must.' Even with Raphael (whom, it is true, they say one doesn't really know until one has seen his work in Rome), I feel a too great excess of the purely spiritual and abstract over the sensuous. And with the glorious Titian and the Venetians, this paradisaic naturalness, this effortless flow of beauty from an exhaustless soil, this breathing forth of pure and unadulterated force and freedom, is only found in their greatest moments; while *this* man, like the immortal gods, seems never to have known an hour of poverty or insufficiency."

He talked on in this fashion for some time, as though to pour out his heart before his friend. But just as they were standing before the little picture of Rubens and his beautiful young wife in the garden, walking beside a bed of tulips, they heard Angelica's voice behind them.

"I cannot help it, gentlemen; you must tear yourselves away from this well-fed domestic happiness and these tedious box-hedges, and come with me. I have something to show you that is quite as much a masterpiece of its kind. Please have confidence in my artistic eye for this once, and come quickly, before the miracle disappears again."

"What is this beautiful thing you have discovered,

Fräulein?" asked Felix, laughing, "that instantly vanishes again if one is not immediately on the watch?"

"Something that is alive—but hardly according to *your* taste, as I imagine it," answered the painter. "But our master there—"

"A beautiful woman?"

"Ah! and what a woman! I have followed her about like a young Don Juan ever since we have been here, and looked askance at her as I stood before the pictures. She seems to be a little near-sighted—at least she half shuts her eyelids when she looks intently at anything; and she looks at the upper row of pictures through a lorgnette. A blonde—and a face, I tell you—and a figure!—just what you call *Portament*, Jansen—the kind of thing that grows much oftener in Trastevere than among our German oaks."

"And why don't you give *me* credit, too, for enough taste to do this lady justice?" asked Felix.

"Because—well, because you are a trifle young, and—thus far at least—you are not an artist. This beauty of mine is far from being conspicuous or attracting attention—like everything really great. I will wager, Baron, that you find my enthusiasm exaggerated. These polished cheeks and temples, and the poise of the head on the neck and the neck on the shoulders, and the whole figure—neither too full nor too slender—but hush! I believe she is standing over there at this moment! Yes, it is she—the one in the raw silk, with the broad, somewhat antiquated straw-hat set back upon her head—doesn't it look almost like a halo? Well, Jansen? Do say something! Generally you are so extraordinarily prompt in picking flaws in my ideals."

Jansen had paused, and had coolly turned his quiet,

clear gaze upon the lady, who stood, entirely unsuspecting of scrutiny, a few alcoves away from them, and turned her full face toward the observing party. Angelica had not said too much. Her figure was of rare grace and majesty, as her light summer-dress showed its beautiful outlines clearly against the dark background; her head, thrown back a little, hardly moved upon the slender, graceful neck, and her hat allowed its form to be all the more distinctly seen, as she wore her soft, light hair simply parted, and falling in a few curls upon her shoulders. Her face was not striking at first glance; quiet, steel-gray eyes, concealing their brilliancy behind the slightly closed lids; a mouth not exactly full or rosy, but of the most beautiful form and full of character; and a chin and neck worthy of an antique statue. She seemed so completely absorbed in the study of the gallery that she did not look up as the friends approached her. It was only when they entered the alcove, and Angelica began to express her wild admiration (quite secretly, she imagined, but really loud enough to be plainly audible), that the stranger suddenly noticed them. With a slight blush, she drew about her shoulders the white shawl that had hung carelessly about her waist—as though to shield her from these curious eyes—cast an annoyed glance at the whispering painter, and left the alcove.

“See how she moves—a queenly walk!” cried Angelica, looking after her. “But alas! I have driven her away. I like that in her, too, that she is too refined to let herself be stared at. *Quant’ è bella!* But *do* say something, Jan- sen! Have you suddenly turned into a statue, or has the enchantment worked too strongly?”

“You may be right, Angelica,” said the sculptor, smiling. “I have met this kind of phenomenal being here

now and then ; and, as they were always strangers (for you never see a native of Munich in the Pinakothek), looking at them was always but a fleeting joy, and I could only gaze after them as they went. So now I have grown cautious. You know ‘a burnt child—’”

“Nonsense !” exclaimed the artist. “This divine being may be a stranger, of course, but no one studies the pictures so closely who is looking at them for the first and last time, only to carry out the instructions of her Baedeker. What’s to prevent our watching her again ? And, even if I lose all to-morrow forenoon over it, and let my group of children dry into the canvas, I must study this exquisite creature once more, and at leisure. There—there she is again ! Rosebud is just passing her, and starts back as if he had met the *Bella di Tiziano* in person ! See how he stares after her ! He has taste, after all, in spite of his old Swedes.”

And now the little battle-painter came hurrying up to his friends, and began to tell them what a discovery he had made. Angelica laughed.

“You come too late, Herr von Rosebud ! I am the one to whom belongs the fame of having discovered this comet ! But do you know what I have in mind, gentlemen ? As none of you seem to be inclined to follow up this adventure, I, as the least suspicious of us four, will take it upon myself to pursue our beauty, and see if I can discover where she lives and who she is. If she stays here but a week, she shall be painted. I have sworn it ! And whichever of you is particularly good shall come to the last sitting ; and Herr Rosebud hereby receives permission to play her a serenade under my window. *Addio, signori !* To-morrow you shall hear how the matter turns out.”

She nodded hurriedly to the friends, and followed the stranger, who had in the mean time passed through the rooms, and was now preparing to leave the gallery.

"I'll wager she does it!" said Rosenbusch. "An astoundingly resolute woman that, and absolutely not to be stopped when an enthusiasm seizes her! This time she really has made a devilish remarkable discovery; but you know what wonderful beauties she has tried to talk up to us before—eh, Jansen? She has a positive mania for admiration, and, when she is possessed by it, she is not very fastidious in her choice of subjects. 'The sea rages, and will have its sacrifice!'"

The sculptor did not answer. He strolled along beside the others for a while, silent and abstracted. Then he suddenly said: "Let us go! It seems as though the art-sense had suddenly disappeared or died out in me. Such a perfect piece of living Nature puts to shame all illusions of color, so that even the great masters seem like bunglers beside it."

CHAPTER VI.

MEANWHILE the beautiful unknown had slowly descended the steps of the Pinakothek, and turned in the direction of the Obelisk, clearly unconscious of the fact that twenty paces behind her an enthusiastic artist was upon her track, never losing sight of her for an instant.

And, indeed, it was a rare refreshment to the eye to look upon this beautiful figure as it passed along. If one may talk of a "silent music of form," here everything was *legato*, while the little artist was in a perpetual *staccato* movement. The stranger moved as though she

stepped on an elastic ground, and seemed not to mind the walk in the least, in spite of the oppressive mid-day heat. She looked neither to the right nor left ; in her hands, on which she wore half-gloves of black net, she held a large green fan, which she opened now and then to protect her face against the sun.

Her worshiper grew more enthusiastic with every moment, and gave utterance to her feelings in muttered monologue, sprinkled, according to her fashion, with Italian interjections.

At length she saw the subject of her admiration turn to the left, and go into a neat house on the Brienner-strasse. Here, she knew, there were furnished rooms to let ; so the stranger must have arranged for a considerable stay in Munich. But how to get at her ? To ring at every bell in the two stories, and ask if a beautiful woman in yellow silk lived there, did not seem very practicable. And did she live here, after all ? Might she not be only making a visit ?

The painter was just debating whether she should walk up and down before the house like a sentry, when a window opened in the corner-room on the ground-floor, before which lay a little garden with its tall shrubs looking dry and dusty in the mid-day sun, and the beauty leaned out to shut the blind. She had taken off her hat, and her hair was a little disordered, which wonderfully added to her beauty. Without hesitating a moment, Angelica marched through the little path past the garden, and entered the vestibule.

Her ring was answered by a very old servant with a white, soldierly-looking mustache, and dressed in a long, silver-buttoned livery-coat that reached to his knees. He eyed the visitor suspiciously, took her card, on which

there was nothing but "Minna Engelken," and came back at once, indicating by a silent nod that his mistress would receive her.

As Angelica entered the stranger was standing in the middle of the room, in the midst of the warm, greenish light that came through the closed blinds. She had hastily put up her hair again, but without special care ; and now she greeted her visitor somewhat coldly, with a scarcely perceptible nod of her exquisite head.

"First of all, I must introduce myself a little more fully than the very obscure name on my card can have done," began the artist, without the slightest trace of embarrassment. (She had begun immediately upon her entrance to study the head, as though at a regular sitting.) "I am a painter ; that is the sole excuse I have for my intrusion upon you. I met you a short time ago at the Pinakothek. It can hardly be a novelty to you to have people stop when you go by, or even follow you. But that a person should intrude into your very house does seem a little too much. My honored Fräulein, or should I call you Madame ?" (the stranger shook her head slightly) "I do not know whether you, too, have a prejudice against women-artists ? If you have, I shall certainly appear to you in a very bad light. And it is true, I must say that this meddling with brushes and colors doesn't particularly become many of my colleagues. Although the nine Muses *are* women, our sex easily get by association with them an unwomanly touch that is not by any means to their advantage.—Oh, please keep that position just an instant ; the three-quarters face is especially effective in this light ! Yes, it is true, Fräulein, I myself know women-artists who think it is prosaic to put on a clean collar or darn a stocking. And yet—"

"If you would only be kind enough to tell me the motive of your visit—"

"I was just coming to that. I had really a double motive. First, to beg your pardon if I drove you away from the gallery by my persistent staring. You see, my dear Fräulein—oh, please bend your head a little—so ! If you could only see how capital that is—that *chiar'oscuro*—and what glorious hair you have ! I see you think I am fairly crazy, treating you like a model in the first ten minutes ! But so much the better ; you will know at once what we are coming to. I am really, you must know, not quite responsible for my actions when I see anything that greatly delights me ; and however lacking my talents may be in the power to produce anything beautiful from mere imagination, I have attained a real mastery in the discovery, the enjoyment, and admiration of true living beauty. The moment I saw you afar off—no, you must not turn away, dear Fräulein. How can you help it, and what sin is it, if an honest artist-soul—of your own sex, too—expresses its delight in and admiration for your beauty ? It seems petty to me, the way that many people keep such a gift of God hidden—or pretend to. There are some little doll-like faces, it is true, whose chief charm lies in the fact that they always seem to be ashamed of their own prettiness. But you, Fräulein—such a classic head—please turn for once fully round toward the light—a pure Palma Vecchio, I tell you—"

The Fräulein could not help smiling, and, although she blushed, permitting this singular, unrestrained, formless admiration. "I confess," she said, "that I have been such a recluse for years, only busied with the care of an invalid, that I have quite fallen out of practice in listening to such flatteries and wearing the fitting expression when

I hear them. And besides, in spite of hard and sad experience, I am still young and foolish enough not to take offense at the pleasure you seem to take in my personal appearance. But if you would only tell me—you spoke of a *double* motive."

"Thank you a thousand times, dear, dear Fräulein!" cried the painter, excitedly. "Every word you say confirms me in the opinion I formed at the first glance—that you would be as good and amiable in character as you were beautiful in face and figure. And you give me courage to come out at once with my other petition: I should be the happiest person under the sun, if I might paint your portrait.—Please don't be alarmed," she added, hurriedly. "The agony is brief—I am no torturer. If you have not more time to spare, I will paint you *alla prima*—at most three or four sittings—you shall not be able to complain of me. Of course I can't ask that you will let me have the picture; but you will allow me to have a little sketch for a study and a souvenir?—The *great* picture—"

"A large portrait, then?"

"Only a three-quarters length, but of course life-size. It would be a sin and a shame to put such a head and such a figure on a canvas the size of a tea-tray. But my dear, best Fräulein, tell me you will have the heavenly goodness to visit my studio—the street and number are on my card—and look at my things, and sit to me only if—if you yourself take pleasure in them; for I would not for anything have you think you were making a sacrifice for the benefit of a mere dauber."

"My dear Fräulein, I really do not know what—"

"Perhaps you haven't time at this moment? Perhaps you are an artist yourself? The careful way in which you studied the pictures in the Pinakothek—"

"Unfortunately I have not the smallest natural talent," answered the Fräulein, smiling; "but only a little taste and a strong yearning toward everything beautiful and artistic; and this is the reason why I have come to Munich—as I am quite alone in the world. It is still uncertain how long I shall stay here. But if I can really give you pleasure by doing so—I rely upon it, of course, that it shall be entirely a matter between ourselves if I sit to you. And in return, you shall initiate me into the secrets of your art, which to a lay observer must always remain closed, no matter of how good intentions he may be, unless he is given the right introduction."

"*Brava! bravissima!*" cried the delighted painter. "Heaven reward you a thousand times for your great kindness; and I will see to it that you shall not repent it. My dear, dear Fräulein, when you know me a little more intimately you will see that you have to do with an honest woman who has a grateful heart, and against whom no one of her friends can utter a reproach."

In the wildest delight she took her leave of the beautiful face—which, in spite of all this worship, had preserved a rather cool expression—and, as though she feared the promise might possibly be retracted on further reflection, she hurried from the room.

When she reached the street, she stood still for a moment, fairly out of breath, tied her loosened hat-strings more firmly under her chin, and gleefully rubbed her hands. "What eyes they'll make!" she said to herself. "How they will envy me! But then what makes them such shy, silly Philistines? It's true, to make such a conquest in a moment, one must not be a man, but just such an utterly harmless old maid as I!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE friends turned their steps toward a beer-garden on the Dultplatz, where, at this time of day—between two and three o'clock—it was pretty quiet in spite of its being Sunday. The noonday guests had finished with their dinners long ago, and the afternoon concert had not yet begun. Instead of it three sleepy fiddlers, an elderly harp-player, and a jovial clarinet were playing on a platform in the middle of the garden. Of these musicians the clarinet-player alone still defied the drowsy influences of the siesta hour, attempting, by wild and desperate runs, to rouse the nodding quartette. On the benches in the shade of the tall ash-trees there sat a very mixed company, for in Munich the differences between the classes is far less marked than in any of the other large German cities ; and among the rest, at the smallest tables, were numerous pairs of lovers who, lulled into a state of dreamy comfort by plentiful eating and drinking, rested their heads on one another's shoulders, held each other's hands and abandoned themselves freely to their feelings. Yet no one seemed to take offense at this; on the contrary, it seemed to belong to the place as much as the gnats that swarmed in the air. The three late arrivals seated themselves in one of the most secluded corners and proceeded to do justice to the viands which the waitress, who treated Jansen with conspicuous respect, had put aside for them. It was anything but a sumptuous meal, but the taste for the pleasures of the table seemed to be so little developed in the sculptor that it never occurred to him to celebrate the reunion with his friend by a bottle of wine. Felix knew this and

overlooked it. Still, he had hoped to find him more animated and communicative after their long separation ; and now he could not help noticing how he sat at his side, pre-occupied and speaking only in monosyllables, intent only upon feeding Homo, who swallowed the big mouthfuls that were given him with grave decorum.

In the mean time, there joined the group a fourth person, for whom the battle-painter seemed to have looked from the beginning. He was a slim young man, pale and with curly black hair, whose manner at once announced him to be an actor. He wore, over one eye, a black silk shade, that made his paleness still more conspicuous, and the sharp lines above his expressive mouth gave evidence of some hardly suppressed suffering. Rosenbusch introduced him as his neighbor, Herr Elfinger, formerly a member of the —— court-theatre, now a clerk in one of the Munich banking-houses. The manner in which Jansen also welcomed him showed that he was one of the intimates of this circle. He bore himself with such easy cheerfulness and enlivened the conversation in such an agreeable way that Felix felt very much drawn toward him, and even Jansen brightened up and took part in the lively chat.

But suddenly the sculptor stood up, looked at his watch, cast a glance over the picket fence that separated the garden from the sunny square, and said, coloring slightly : “ I must leave you now, old boy. My friends here will bear me witness that nothing is to be done with me on Sunday afternoons. At such times I have to go my own ways and to fulfill certain duties, which, to-day in particular, I could only escape with the greatest difficulty. I hope you will excuse me.”

“ He has to turn back into a sea monster one day in

seven, like Melusine," laughed Rosenbusch. "We are used to that."

Felix looked up in surprise. "Don't let me disturb you, old boy," he said. "Besides, I still have to find a lodging. Where are you quartered? Perhaps I could find a place in your neighborhood—"

"I am not going home now and I should hardly recommend the neighborhood where I live," the sculptor interrupted, with such a frown that it put an end to all further questioning. "You will find me in my studio again to-morrow. Good-by for to-day and good luck to you. Come, Homo!"

He nodded to his friends without giving them his hand, pulled his hat down over his eyes, and left the garden with his faithful dog.

They saw him stride with rapid steps across the square and approach a two-horse *fiacre* that stood on the other side, not far from the gate, apparently waiting for him on the shady side of the street. Then, as he stepped in, they could plainly see that there was some one sitting inside; there was a glimpse of a woman's bright-colored dress, and a child's little hand thrust a sunshade out the window. Except this, all the windows were shut, notwithstanding the great heat; and, as the mysterious vehicle rolled rapidly away, the friends who had been looking after it turned to one another with wonder in their eyes.

"He appears to have a family," said Felix. "Why doesn't he say anything to anybody about it? Even to me, his oldest friend, he has never uttered a word about his projected or perhaps actual marriage, about which there was a rumor some six years ago. I thought the whole matter had either fallen through or else turned out unhappily. But now he seems, after all, not to be alone. Do you know anything about his private circumstances?"

"Nothing whatever," answered the painter. "None of us have ever set foot across his threshold ; and, the moment any one asks where he lodges, he grows as snappish as a bear, just as you saw him a few minutes ago. As for women, he will have nothing to do with them, that can be seen plainly enough from all he does. Whether, in spite of all this, he has a household of his own, can't be discovered. He once cut dead a prying fellow who followed him one night to see where he kept himself."

"I think," said Elfinger, "that the pleasure we get from his society six days in the week is so great that we might at least leave him to himself on the seventh. But now let us help the Baron look for rooms, and debate how we can best show him the city this evening."

When, toward midnight, Felix left the beer-cellar, where he had been for several hours enjoying the evening air, and returned to his lodgings—a suite of pleasant rooms overlooking flower-gardens and the quiet streets beyond—a singular feeling of depression suddenly came over him. He had now attained what he cared more for than for anything else. No one could enjoy more perfect freedom than he. No one could begin life afresh more untrammelled by social forms. Then, too, the cheerful, lively city, with its gay life, the free and easy artists' society into which he had entered—all this had corresponded with his wish and expectations, and promised him compensation for many a ruined hope. It was the only atmosphere that seemed suited to him, the only surroundings among which he could find again, even in the Old World, something of that unrestrained freedom that he had enjoyed so much beyond the ocean. And when, notwithstanding all this, he went to bed with a heavy sigh and waited long for sleep in vain—why was it ?

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the following morning, Felix brought a whole armful of his sketch-books to Jansen. The latter seemed to look through them with interest, and listened patiently to the accounts of the adventures, of which many of them were hasty illustrations, but he did not utter a single word in regard to any artistic worth which the sketches might possess.

When the last page had been turned, and Jansen, with a quiet "hm!" had begun to pile up the books and tablets in a little tower, Felix was forced to ask whether he had not made some progress after all.

"Progress? Why, that depends upon the way you look at it."

"And how do you look at it, old fellow?"

"I?—Hm! I look at it from a geographical point of view."

"You are very good. I understand perfectly."

"Don't be angry, my dear fellow, but understand me rightly. I mean, on the path of dilettantism, on which you have been wandering up to this date, all progress must necessarily be deceptive, even though, outwardly, you have circumnavigated the world; for, after all, all your efforts move in a circle. I am very sorry for it, though."

"For what?"

"That you really want to take up art in earnest. You might have remained such an enviable dilettante, for you have all the necessary qualifications to an uncommon degree."

"And they are?"

"Self-confidence, time, and money. No, don't be angry. I am truly serious when I say this to you, and of course it would be needless for me to assure you that I mean well when I say it. Seriously : these traveling sketches of yours are done so skillfully that any of the illustrated papers might consider themselves lucky if they had such special artists. And yet I wish, since you are determined to be an artist, that they were not half so skillful."

"If it is nothing more than that, a remedy can easily be found. You will soon see how much talent I have for unskillfulness, when you give me something to model."

The sculptor shook his head gently. "It is not the hands," he said. "It is the mind that has already attained a very respectable maturity and facility in you ; only, unfortunately, in a wrong direction. For the truth is, my dear fellow, the very things that please you best, and have probably most impressed unprofessional persons, the dash and readiness, the so-called artist's touch, those are the very things that stand most in the way of your getting back into the right track. It is just as if, instead of learning to write in the ordinary way, one should begin with stenography. He never in all his life will have a good handwriting. For the spirit of dilettantism, take it for a l in all, is, like that of stenography, in the art of abbreviation ; in substituting a symbol for the *form*, just as in the other case we substitute one for the letter, so that in the course of time all real feelings—yes, the very want of and appreciation of the rightly-developed natural form—are hopelessly lost. Why is it then that the dilettanti attain their end so much more quickly than the true artists ? Because, with this system of abbreviation, they steer straight for those results which seem to them of the most importance : resemblance, spirit, elegance of execution. For that

reason they are often marvelously skillful in mastering the proportions of a face, for instance, and setting it off by a few dots and strokes so that everybody cries : ‘ Oh ! how like ! how speaking ! and how quickly done ! ’ The true artist knows that the length of time spent in the production is by no means a measure of excellence ; and as he has not only a general sense of proportion, but also a feeling for the true form itself, he does not rest until he has done it full justice—until, so to speak, he has worked *outward* from the very core of that the exterior of which his eyes have already taken in and fully comprehended. However,” he went on after a short pause, during which he unwound the wet cloths from his Bacchante, “ you are at liberty to believe that all this is merely my personal opinion and nothing more than exaggerated estimate of what constitutes true art. In ordinary life the artist is distinguished from the dilettante only by the fact that the former follows the thing as a calling, and the latter only for his own amusement. According to this, you would be an artist from the moment you cast aside the baron, the statesman or jurist, the *homme d’action*, that you have in you, and regularly devoted a certain number of hours of the day to dirtying your fingers with clay. If you stick to it persistently, it would be very hard lines indeed if, in the course of several years, you should not possess the necessary mechanical skill just as well as any one else. Even to become an academic professor need not be an unattainable aim of your ambition. And if, in spite of all that, I should still continue, in my heart, to look upon you as a born dilettante, you could smile down upon me graciously, and heap coals of fire upon my head by proposing me as an honorary member of your academy. Ah ! my dear boy, I tell you, if you should make a close examination of

many of our most famous great men, you would bring to light little else than a disguised and beautiful dilettantism, made up of humbug, elegant trappings, and perhaps a few so-called ideas. I know painters who dash off a hand or a foot, a horse's head or an oak-tree, with as unerring an audacity as—well, as a thorough stenographer will bring a two hours' speech into the compass of an octavo page. But Lord have mercy upon them, for they have long since ceased to know what they do ; and as the dear public has an even coarser sense, a still blunter natural feeling, and even more respect for appearances—why, it's all just as it should be, and no one can complain that he has been cheated."

For some time after this speech silence reigned in the studio. There were heard only the fluttering of the sparrows, the heavy breathing of Homo, for the old fellow was already enjoying his morning nap again, and, in the saint-factory near by, the clatter and scraping and picking of seven or eight chisels in the hands of the assistants who were hard at work.

"Thank you, Dædalus," said Felix, at last. "Upon the whole you are perfectly right, and I think it very kind of you to try and scare me off so thoroughly. But, with your permission, I intend to hold to my intentions until I have been made wise by my own experience. If, a year from this time, you preach me the same sermon, you shall see how penitently I will beat my breast and become converted from all my sins. But now, first give me something to sin with. Look here, my coat is already off, and I have nothing more to do but to roll up my shirt-sleeves."

"So be it, then !" replied Jansen, with a good-natured smile. "Not as God wills, but as you wish—here !"

He went to the large closet and took out a skull, which

he laid on a little table near the window. At the same time he wheeled a modeling-bench out of the corner, placed it before the table, and pointed, without speaking, to a big lump of clay that lay moist and shiny in a tub.

"Are we to study phrenology?" laughed Felix, rather nervously, for a suspicion began to dawn upon him.

"No, my dear fellow, but we must take pains to make as exact a copy as possible of this round mass of bones. . . . We shall have plenty of time for the flesh when we have first mastered the skeleton."

"I am to model a whole skeleton?"

"Bone for bone, down to the big toe. In this way we combine an anatomical course with practice in modeling forms. Yes, my dear fellow," he smilingly continued, as he perceived the horrified expression of his pupil; "if you thought to begin your apprenticeship with the soft, white flesh of a woman, you have greatly deceived yourself. However, since you have already done quite enough preparatory studying in this field—"

He suddenly broke off. On the landing, outside, they heard a pleasant feminine voice say:

"Is this the way to Fräulein Minna Engelken's studio?"

"If you will kindly give yourself the trouble to mount a flight higher," responded the hoarse bass of the janitor. "The door to the right—the name is on the sign. The Fräulein has been there for the last two hours."

"Thanks."

At the first sound of the voice Jansen had hurried to the door; he now opened it a little and peeped out. Then he came back to Felix, and, with his face slightly flushed, went silently to work.

"Who was the lady?" asked Felix, though he felt no particular curiosity on the subject.

"The stranger we saw yesterday. Strange! when I heard that unknown voice her face suddenly came up before my eyes again."

Felix said nothing. He had gone up to the modeling-bench, had begun to work at a great ball of clay about as large as the skull, and appeared to be completely absorbed in his task.

But they had scarcely been working on in this way, side by side and in silence, for more than a quarter of an hour when some one knocked softly on the door and Rosenbusch entered, looking excited, merry, and full of mischief.

He nodded to the friends, stepped close up to them and said, with an air of mysterious importance: "Do you know who is up-stairs? The lady of the Pinakothek! Angelica is painting her picture—she has succeeded—an incredibly resolute woman that! And can keep a secret like the devil! Now just conceive of it; I discovered her early this morning clearing up her studio, as though the queen had given notice of a visit. For that matter it always does look damned elegant and neat up there—flowers in whichever direction you turn, and a hothouse fragrance that makes you sick. But, to-day, it is a positive show-room! 'What the devil is this, Angelica?' said I; 'is to-day your birthday, or are you going to get engaged, or are you painting a Russian princess?'—for I had long forgotten all about the affair of yesterday. But she, turning round the old yellow-silk cushion on the arm-chair so as to present the side which had the fewest spots—she scarcely looked at me, and said: 'Go and get to work, Herr von Rosebud'—that is what she always calls

me when she is cross—"I am not at home to you, to-day!" In this way she morally turned me out of doors without farther ceremony, and, I must confess, I rather like it in her; energy, fearlessness, the courage of one's opinions, are always fine, even in a woman. So I withdrew, wondering, and was already at work laying on my colors when I heard some one coming up the stairs. Yes, I was right, she was going to Angelica; and as the wall between us is not very thick, and they did not at first take the precaution to lower their voices, I discovered the whole mystery—that it is our beauty of yesterday, that she is going to have her picture painted, and that her first name is Julie. And now I appeal to you, friends and companions in art, are we men or cowardly poltroons? Are we to suffer this vixen to carry away such a prize from under our very noses, and to withhold such a paragon of beauty from us under our own roof? Or shall we rush up as one man, and, in the name of art, lay siege to the door of this obdurate sister, and compel her, by force or persuasion, to open to us?"

"I would advise you, Rosenbusch, to go quietly upstairs again and wreak your martial ardor on the battle of Lützen," Jansen answered, without the slightest approach to a smile. "But, if your excitement will not let you work, convey your homage to the lady through the wall by means of your flute. Perhaps they will invite you to come round and declaim some of your verses."

"Wretched scoffer!" cried the battle-painter. "I thought to render you a service by bringing you this news. But you are of the earth, earthy, and are incapable of soaring to any height of enthusiasm. Well, God be with you! I see that I am not understood down here!"

He rushed out of the door, and, sure enough, they

soon afterward heard the flute pouring out its most melting passages.

This language, however, did not seem to be understood in the next room. Angelica's room remained tight shut, and when it was opened, a few hours after, soft steps came down the stairs, and the listeners below were led to conclude that the sitting was over.

In the mean while dinner-time had come, and the assistants in the adjoining room had stopped work and left the studio. Jansen, too—although, as a rule, he seldom made a pause before two o'clock—now laid down his modeling-tool.

"Come," he said, "you must make your calls of ceremony upon our fellow-lodgers."

They mounted the stairs, and went first into Rosenbusch's studio. As no notice had been taken of his flute-playing, he had seated himself at his easel again, and had set himself zealously to work to paint away his anger. His room certainly presented a most remarkable appearance; the walls shone, almost like those of an armory, with old arms, halberds, muskets, and swords, relieved here and there by enormous boots with wheel-spurs, leather collars, saddles, and singular stirrups. An immense old kettle-drum stood on a rickety stand in front of a worm-eaten arm-chair, and served as a table on which to pile all sorts of odds and ends. Some cactus-plants, with great red blossoms, stood in full bloom in the window, and among them was a delicate little wire-cage, containing two white mice, who ran restlessly up and down, squeaking and looking shyly at the new faces out of their little red eyes.

The battle of Lützen stood on the easel; it was quite a vigorous work, and Felix could praise it with a good conscience. The horses, especially, reared and plunged,

full of life and spirits ; and the young baron could hardly believe it when the painter confessed that he had never mounted a horse in his life. After they had joked and laughed about this for a while, and Rosenbusch had delivered an earnest speech in defense of the romantic school, he threw off the old, much-patched Swedish trooper's jacket in which he always painted, in order, as he said, to have the true historical inspiration, and dressed himself, in spite of the heat, in a violet-colored velvet coat, so that he might accompany the friends in their visit to the adjoining room.

Their knock on Angelica's door was answered by a cordial "Come in !" Rosenbusch had not exaggerated : the studio did, in truth, resemble a hot-house decked out for a festival, to which the sketches, and studies, and half-finished pictures of flowers merely served as decorations. The painter had had a window cut through the wall on the east side at her own expense, in order that she might give her plants, which she tended with scientific knowledge, plenty of sun whenever the nature of her work did not require a pure north light. The plants were truly grateful, and twined and throve so luxuriantly that the slender stems of the palms and figs reached almost to the ceiling.

Angelica stood before her easel in an antiquated painting-jacket, her straw hat perched on one side, her cheeks glowing from her work, and was so busily occupied in "toning down" the background that she merely nodded to her friends as they entered, without interrupting her work.

"She has gone !" she cried to them, "otherwise I could not have let you in, no matter how much I had wanted to. My children, you have no conception of what

a charming person she is! If I were a man, I would marry her or blow my brains out!"

"You are indulging in very reckless assertions," Rosenbusch interposed, raising himself a little on his toes, and stroking his thick beard. "Just let's see if she really is so dangerous."

Angelica stepped back from the easel.

"Gentlemen," she said, "I hope you will praise me. Either I understand as much about painting as a roast goose, or this will be my best picture, and a real work of art. But just look at these curves! All large, simple, noble, such as never grow under our native heaven. My first idea was to paint the picture *alla prima*; but in the nick of time it occurred to me that I should be very foolish to do so. For the longer I can study this heavenly face, the happier I shall be. Just see this figure, Jansen. Have you often come across anything like it?"

"The lady has style," remarked Rosenbusch, assuming as cool an air as possible. "However, she doesn't seem to be particularly young, or else your dead coloring gives her ten years too many."

"You are a strange mortal, Herr von Rosebud," answered the painter, angrily. "In art you rave over nothing but old leather, but in life no school-girl's complexion is rosy and satiny enough to suit you. It is true, my beauty here told me herself that she was already—but I won't be such a fool as to tell a girl's secret to gentlemen. But of this I can assure you: that twenty years from now, when certain pretty little dolls' faces have long grown old and faded, that woman there will still be so beautiful that people will stand still in the streets to look after her."

"And may we be permitted to ask of what nationality she is?" inquired Felix.

“Why not? She makes no secret of the fact that she is from Saxony, although you would never detect it from her accent; nor that her name is Julie S., nor that she lost her old mother a year or so ago, and now stands quite alone in the world. However, we haven’t been having a mere family gossip, but the most profound conversation on art-matters. She is more intelligent in such things, let me tell you, than many of our colleagues. And now you must excuse me, gentlemen, if I don’t let you interrupt me in my work, but go on and finish this background to-day, before the colors dry in.”

Up to this time Jansen had not spoken a syllable. Now he stepped up to Angelica, gave her his hand, and said:

“If you don’t spoil this, my dear friend, you will make something out of it that will do you great honor. Adieu!”

He turned quickly away, and strode out of the studio without casting a glance to right or left.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN his friends overtook him in the street he remained silent and serious; while Rosenbusch praised, in the most extravagant language, the beauty of the picture.

“If my heart were not already in such firm hands,” he said, with a sigh, “who knows what might happen! But constancy is no empty dream. Besides, Angelica would scratch any one’s eyes out who tried to play the Romeo to her Juliet. But where are you dragging us to, Jansen?”

"We are going to see 'Fat Rossel.'"

"Then I prefer to withdraw at once to my feeding-place and to await you there. I have made a solemn vow never again to visit that accursed Sybarite just before meal-time. It smells so devilishly of ambergris, *pâté de foie gras* and East-Indian birds'-nests, so that after coming away a man feels like a thorough vagabond over his wretched dumplings. The devil take these lazy voluptuaries! Long live energy and *sauerkraut*!"

After this fierce outburst he nodded smilingly to the two others, slouched his big hat over his left ear, and turned, whistling, into a side street.

"Who is this 'Fat Rossel' against whom our friend Rosebud displays all his thorns?" asked Felix.

"He isn't really so fierce as he tries to make himself out. The two are good comrades, and would go through fire and water for one another in case of need. This so-called 'Fat Rossel'—one Edward Rossel—is a very rich man who isn't obliged to earn his living by painting—and for that reason lets his great talent lie fallow. However, he has reduced his intellectual laziness and amateur enjoyment of art to a system, and concerning this system Rosenbusch invariably falls foul of him; for he himself, in spite of all his 'energy,' has never produced anything of much account. Here we are at the house."

They passed through the pretty little front garden, before which they had halted the day previous while on their way to the Pinakothek, entered the door of a villa-like house, and mounted a staircase covered with soft carpets. The hall shone with polished marbles, bronze candelabra, and beautiful flowering plants in porcelain pots, that perfumed the whole vestibule.

When they entered the high-studded room above,

that served as a studio, but looked more like a museum of choice objects and works of art than it did like a regular artist's workshop, there rose from a low divan, covered with a leopard's skin, a singular figure. On a portly but by no means clumsy body rested a stately head, in which sparkled a pair of exceedingly bright black eyes. The face was of a very white complexion, the beautiful hands were daintily cared for. The cut of the features, with the close cropped silky hair, and the long black beard, recalled the beautiful, dignified type of the high-bred Orientals. This impression was still further heightened by a little red fez, shoved back on the head, and a variegated Persian dressing-gown with slippers to match, into which his bare feet were thrust, while the dressing-gown apparently served in lieu of any other clothing.

Slowly, but with great cordiality, the painter advanced to meet his friends, shook hands with them, and said : " I made your acquaintance yesterday from a distance, Herr Baron—through the blinds, when that sly dog Rosebud was trying to entice me out into the noonday heat with his flute. But that kind of thing is against my principles. It may be all very meritorious to eat one's bread in the sweat of one's brow. But as for enjoying art when reeking with perspiration—never ! Excuse the costume in which I receive you. I have just been taking a douche bath and afterward resting a quarter of an hour. In five minutes I shall be in a condition to present my material part with propriety."

He disappeared into a side chamber, that was only separated by a magnificent piece of Gobelin tapestry from his studio, and went on talking with his friends while completing his toilet.

" Just take a look at my Böcklin, that I bought the day

before yesterday—over there by the window on the little easel—I am quite happy over the possession. Well, what do you say to it, Jansen? Isn't that something to console one's self with for a while, in the midst of this universal poverty of art?"

It was a little forest picture, that stood in the most favorable light, near the window; it represented a dense wood of lofty oaks and laurel bushes, through a little cleft of which could be seen a slender strip of the distant horizon, and in one corner a patch of blue sky. At the feet of the shady trees a brook rippled through the luxuriant grass, on the banks of which reclined a sleeping nymph, with her nursling at her side, its blunt little nose pressed close against the full maternal breast, from which it seemed to be feeding quietly. In the centre of the picture, leaning against a luxuriant tree, stood the young father, a slim, well-built faun, looking down well pleased upon his family, and holding in his hand the shepherd's flute with which he had just played his wife to sleep.

Felix and Jansen were still absorbed in the contemplation of this charming work when Rossel again appeared.

"Such a thing is refreshing, isn't it?" he said. "It is a comfort to know that there are still men who have such beautiful dreams, and the courage to tell them to others, no matter if advanced and sensible humanity, which now, thank God, has outgrown its baby shoes, and every day sets its foot down more squarely on the broad sole of realism, does shake its head and talk about having gotten beyond such standpoints. This man is one of the few who interest me. You have undoubtedly seen his splendid pictures in the Schack Gallery? No? Well, since you have only been two days in Munich, I will for-

give your ignorance. I will take you there ; it will afford me the greatest pleasure to recruit a quiet list of worshippers for my few idols."

"First of all," said Felix, smiling, "you would do me a greater favor if you would show me something by one Edward Rossel, to whose acquaintance my friends have led me to look forward with great curiosity."

"My own immortal works !" cried the painter, threatening Jansen with his finger. "I know who is behind all this. I know the sly cabals of my much-esteemed friends, who seize every opportunity to parade my unproductiveness before my eyes. I know that they mean no harm, and give me credit for some talent ; I ought to be ashamed of myself for not sharing this good opinion and at last rousing myself to action. But it all glances aside from the armor of my own self-knowledge. I don't deny that I have all sorts of good qualifications for an artist, sense and brains and some insight into the true aims of art. Unfortunately, there is only one little thing lacking—the disposition to really produce something. I should have been just the man to have been born a Raphael without hands, and would have borne this fate with the greatest complacency. But won't you light a cigar, or do you prefer a chibouque ? By the way, a little refreshment wouldn't be out of place, considering this tropical temperature."

Without waiting for an answer, he rang a beautifully chased silver bell.

A young servant-girl, of pretty figure and graceful manner, entered ; the painter whispered a word in her ear, whereupon the girl disappeared and returned, five minutes after, with a silver waiter, on which stood a wicker-work bottle and some glasses.

"I brought this wine myself from Samos," said Rossel;

"You must at least taste it and drink to our good friendship!"

"Then let me immediately sin against that friendship and ask a somewhat indiscreet question: how is it possible for you to bury, like a dead treasure, a talent which you yourself admit you have?"

"My dear fellow," replied the artist, coolly, "the matter is much simpler than you suppose. My object is, like that of all men—let them prate as much as they like about duty, virtue, or self-sacrifice—to be as happy as possible. But happiness consists, as I believe, in nothing else than in creating for one's self a certain state, a manner of life or pursuit, in which one finds himself at the height of his individuality, in the full enjoyment of his peculiar powers and gifts. Therefore, every man has a happiness of his own; and nothing can be more foolish than for one person to object to another's way of enjoying himself, or to persuade or advise others to exchange their way for his. The more any one makes himself feel, by his manner of life, that he is a particular individual, the more Nature has attained her end in making him, and the more contented he can be with himself and his situation. All unhappiness arises from the fact that men try to do things for which they are not fitted. If you give a million to a man born with a genius for begging, you will make him an unhappy millionaire. He can no longer exercise his talent. A virtuoso in suffering, a Stylites, or a sister of charity, for whom you should suddenly provide a healthy and comfortable life, would at once lose all individuality and so all happiness. For it is undeniable that there are men who are only conscious of their individuality when they are torturing themselves, in the coarser or finer sense of the expression. To such, a state of repose is an abasement,

and to this class belong all truly productive artists. To work, to produce something which shall afterward stand as a monument of their power, appears to them the highest happiness ; and this happiness ought to be accorded to them all the more readily, from the fact that most of them cannot live without it. Only they ought to be just enough to look at the matter also from the opposite point of view, where an individual only feels conscious of his powers and gifts when in the free enjoyment of an apparently fruitless repose. When I lie on my back and make pictures in the smoke of my cigar, or gaze upon the works which great creative beings have produced in times gone by, am I not, in my way, putting to good use that buried treasure within me in which you were so good as to believe? and making of this individual, whom his friends accuse of culpable laziness, the very thing for which he was really fitted and intended—a perfectly harmonious and happy man? Once in a while, indeed, the vulgar prejudice seizes even me, and I suddenly grow tremendously active. But after the paroxysm has lasted a week, at the longest, I suddenly see the folly of the proceeding and throw the unfinished daub into some dark closet, among other embryos of immortal works. Ah ! my dear friend, there is so much struggling, and pushing, and producing going on, that a quiet, inoffensive art-lover of my disposition might well be tolerated as a salutary antidote to this epidemic of activity.”

“ We will let this old apple of discord drop for to-day,” interrupted Jansen, smiling. “ I won’t yet give up my old bet that some fine day you will cease to take comfort in this bed that you have stuffed with sophisms, and will begin to seek your happiness in some other way. But in the meanwhile you might certainly show yourself at my place again. I should like to know what you would say

to my dancing girl ; and besides, I have done all sorts of other things since you were there."

"I will come, Hans. You know how I delight to take to heart the frightful example of industry that I see in your saint-factory. By the way—isn't next Saturday 'Paradise?'"

"Certainly. The last before the autumn. Most of the fellows have already begun to make their preparations for the summer vacation, and in fourteen days we three shall probably be almost the only ones who still hold out in the city."

They left the studio, the painter accompanying them as far as the gate of the front yard, and taking leave of Felix with great cordiality and the hope that he should see him often.

"What is this about 'Paradise?'" inquired the latter, when they were alone in the street again.

"You shall soon see for yourself. We come together once a month and attempt to delude ourselves into the idea that it is possible in the midst of this world to throw off the hypocrisy of society, and return once more to a state of innocence. And for a few years past we have really been fairly successful. A little group of good fellows has been brought together, who are all equally impressed with the worthlessness of our social state. But, after all, the German is not a social creature ; that which constitutes the charm of such societies among the Latins and Slavs—the delight in talking for talking's sake, a certain delicacy in lying, and, moreover, an early-acquired and really humane tact and consideration for one's neighbors—all this we may possibly gain in time in some of our large cities. But for the time being it is certainly foreign to the genius of our nation, and it is only feebly

developed. The consequence is that in this city of art, where of all the arts that of sociability is most behind-hand, one has to choose between two evils : the conventional society entertainments, which are chiefly devoted to eating and drinking, and where one is seldom compensated for the constraint of cultivated *ennui* ; or else Philistinism over the beer-table. For this reason we have adopted another plan, which, to be sure, can only be successful when all those who take part in it are united by the same longing for freedom, and the same respect for the freedom of their neighbors. For, when no one wraps a cloak about him, but shows himself unrestrainedly just as he is, no one, on the other hand, has a right to pounce maliciously on the weak spots which his neighbor may possibly expose—and each must, upon the whole, be so constituted that he can show himself in his true character without being disagreeable.”

CHAPTER X.

IN the first days of his wanderings through the quaint old streets—for he avoided, as far as possible, the new and deserted quarters of the town—Felix felt to the full the charm of South German life ; that robust, unrestrained power of enjoyment, that perpetual holiday-mood, whose motto is “ You may do what you choose.” That this cheerful state also has its dark sides ; that it is not possible, without the sacrifice of some higher benefits, to establish an average of character and education which makes all classes mingle easily ; that the lack of a proletariat brings with it the lack of a rich and powerful intellectual aristocracy—all such political and social speculations

never entered our friend's head, in spite of the fact that his travels about the world had given him a keen insight into the civilization of different countries. In a spirit of quiet defiance, he took delight in doing here the very things which would have been most severely frowned on in that native town from which he had fled. He visited the dingiest restaurants and the most modest beer-gardens, ate from an uncovered table, and drank from the mug which he had himself washed under the water-pipe ; and it seemed as if the only thing wanting to make his happiness complete was, that the highly aristocratic society with which he had quarreled should happen by and see, in silent horror, how happy the fugitive was in his self-imposed exile.

And yet, since everything inspired by pique carries with it a secret feeling of dissatisfaction, he was after all not quite contented. Jolly as it looked to wander about again at his own sweet will, it was, after all, very different from what it had been years before when he first spread his wings. In short, in his moments of reflection, when he neither cared to forget nor to deceive himself, he was forced to admit, with a kind of shame, that he was no longer young enough to go on looking upon life as a brilliant adventure amid shifting scenes, and that, in riper years, more depended upon the piece and the *rôle* which one played in it than upon the scenes and the spectators who sit before the footlights.

True, he had from the first devoted himself zealously to his new apprenticeship. But his conscience was too delicate to forget what Jansen had said in regard to his fitness for art. Had his friend congratulated him upon his decision, who knows but what, in spite of all that was wanting to his happiness, he might have felt as contented as

it is possible for any man to feel in this imperfect world? But his proud heart told him that the people who were now to be his associates did not, in their hearts, consider him quite genuine, but looked upon him as a singular being, who, from mere whim, had taken up with art instead of with some other noble passion more suitable to his rank.

This unfortunate feeling was still further heightened by the fact that his relation to the only old friend he had here, for whose society he had passionately yearned, did not, in spite of their daily intercourse, ripen again into the old intimacy.

When, years before, they had become acquainted with one another in Kiel, where Felix first began the study of the law, they had soon become inseparable. The lonely artist stood in special need of a friend with quick perceptions, who, in those early days when his talent was cautiously working its way to the front, could fan his courage by taking a lively interest in his work; and Felix soon saw enough of the senseless and tasteless life led by his fellow-students to make him long for other society. The hours that he stole from his beer-club and his fencing-school, in order to work with Jansen at all sorts of noble arts, sometimes making an attempt himself with a piece of clay, and then again spending the evening in his friend's simple little room in confidential talk over a very frugal supper and some modest wine, were looked back upon as the happiest of his whole youth. Even then Jansen struck people as a very original, reserved, strong, and forceful man, who had no needs but those which he was able to supply by his own unaided powers. It was known that he sprang from a peasant family, that, impelled by accidental incentives only and without any encouragement

from teachers or patrons, he had made himself an artist by the force of his iron will. How he also succeeded in attaining, in other fields, such an education that it was not easy for any one to detect the want of a regular course of schooling, was scarcely less incomprehensible. Gradually his talent began to attract some attention, and a few orders straggled in, which enabled him to earn a scanty living. But as he scorned to let himself be lionized in society, to be petted by ladies and engaged for æsthetic tea parties, the first feeling of interest soon grew cold; and with a shrug of the shoulders people left this eccentric individual, who placed himself in such sharp antagonism to the modern tendency of art, to himself again, and to his pictures of naked gods and his undisguised contempt for social traditions.

It was thus that Felix found him then, and he found him but little different now, after all these years of separation—averse to all intercourse with men who did not stand in some relation or other to his art, and inaccessible, so far as his inner life was concerned, even to his few intimate acquaintances. But still the years had not passed without leaving some traces. They had so estranged him, even from that one person to whom he had then loved to unbosom himself, that, after the first outburst of his old tenderness, a steady medium temperature had set in in the relations of the two old friends, that was scarcely a degree warmer than that between Jansen and the other members of the little circle. During the long hours that the pupil spent working at his master's side, there were hundreds of opportunities to talk over old times. But the sculptor seemed to avoid all recollections of the past. Then, they had made no secret to one another of their love-affairs; and now Felix made several attempts to re-

turn to the subject of his late betrothal. But, when he did this, it was as if some dark spectre rose up before Jansen. He sought to give the conversation a general direction with some bitter sarcasm or forced jest, and soon relapsed into more sullen silence than before.

Felix felt how heavily this cool reserve weighed on his spirits, which would have been none too light even without it. After the shipwreck of his happy love, he had tried to fall back upon this friendship ; and now, though he had indeed found firm ground, it was no longer the green island of his youth, but bare and inhospitable ; and the soil, which was then so yielding, had turned to rugged rock.

One evening, as he was walking down the Brienner-strasse, alone, and not in the most cheerful spirits, he met the beautiful stranger, who now visited Angelica daily, but who was jealously guarded by the latter from all other eyes. She appeared to be returning home from a walk, and her old servant walked a few steps behind her, carrying her shawl. Felix bowed to her, and she distantly returned his salute. She evidently had not recognized him. Then he saw her enter the house, and soon afterward the corner-room on the ground-floor was lit up by the light of a lamp. It would have been easy for him to watch her proceedings through the low window. But he did not care at all to do so, though he admired her beauty. For no beautiful, no charming face could cross his path without carrying his thoughts back to his lost love, and plunging him in a melancholy reverie.

And so it was to-day. And suddenly it struck him as so absurd and idiotic for him to be wandering about alone in this utterly strange city, among people who cared nothing for him, separated from her who was his only love,

that he could not help bursting out into a laugh, only to sigh all the more sadly the next minute.

He felt the impossibility, in his present mood, of joining his friends, who were waiting for him at a beer-cellar. Jansen was generally one of the party. But, even if everything between them had remained just as it was in the old times, Felix would have avoided him to-day.

When he found himself in such a mood that he could not endure his fellow-men, he generally found that he nowhere felt so well as upon horseback.

He went to a stable in the neighborhood, and was soon cantering across the Obeliskplatz on a powerful horse. He rode down the beautiful broad street, through the marble gate of the Propylæa, and outside, in the shady avenue that leads to the Nymphenburger Villa, he gave his horse full rein. But even here, where a fresher air blew across the quiet fields, it was so sultry that the animal soon dropped into a quieter gait of his own accord.

The street was not very lively. Only a few workmen were strolling home from the town, and some soldiers came singing arm-in-arm out of a tavern. They were walking behind a girl who was hastening to get back to town before it grew quite dark. She was neatly dressed, of a very pretty figure, and, according to the fashion then in vogue, wore her hair falling loose over her shoulders. This seemed to incite the fellows to strike up an acquaintance with her, and the short, snappish way in which she repelled their advances only fanned their impudence the higher. One seized her by her fluttering hair, another laughingly attempted to get possession of her arm; and, as it chanced that the foot-path behind the trees was quite deserted, she would have tried in vain to shake off her tormentors had not Felix happened to gallop up just at

that moment. He shouted to the fellows in a loud voice to instantly let the girl alone, and go to the devil. Whether they took him for an officer in *mufti*, or were frightened by his commanding manner, they obeyed at once, and started across the fields to the barracks, whose massive structure towered from afar across the dark meadow.

The deliverer now took a closer look at the girl. There could be no doubt he had seen this little nose, these white teeth, and that red hair, once before, on that first morning in Jansen's studio. And now he recalled her name.

"Good - evening, Fräulein Zenz," he said. "What lonely and dangerous walks you take!"

"Dangerous!" she returned, laughing, for she had immediately recognized him. "What is there dangerous about it? They wouldn't have eaten me. I can take care of myself."

"But if I hadn't by good luck come up—"

"Do you suppose I couldn't have got away from those two without your help? I can run like the wind. You couldn't catch me even on horseback."

"We'll see about that, you little witch! If you don't look out—"

He bent over and began, in his turn, to try and seize hold of her hair. But her slim little figure instantly spun round on its heels, so that her long locks slipped out of his hand again, and then she sprang like lightning over the narrow ditch by the side of the road, and, before he could collect himself, was away across the broad field, where she suddenly vanished from his sight as if by miracle.

His horse had shied at the girl's quick movement, and, for a moment, gave his master enough to do in looking after him. Now, when he had quieted him again, and,

half laughing, half provoked, had dashed into the meadow in pursuit of the fugitive, he could find no trace of her. He called her name, spoke to her persuasively, and promised not to touch her any more if she would only show herself again. It was only after he had given up the search, and had angrily wheeled his horse round in order to ride back into the avenue, that he heard, from behind a heap of stones close at his side, which he had overlooked in his zeal, a shrill giggling; and suddenly the girl sprang from the ground and coolly marched up to him.

"Now you see that you couldn't have caught me, if I had not wanted you to," she cried. "Now just ride quietly home; I can find my way well enough."

"You are a regular witch—that's what you are!" he cried, laughingly. "I see that people have more reason to be afraid of you than you of them. But listen, Zenz, since we have chanced to meet in this way, tell me now why you won't come to Herr Jansen's any more?"

The question seemed to be disagreeable to her. She turned sharply on her heel, and said, defiantly, beginning to put her dishevelled hair in order: "What is that to you? What do you know about me, anyway? I can do as I like, I suppose."

"To be sure, Zenz. But it would be very nice of you if you would listen to reason, and show yourself again. I am an artist, too, and would like very much to make a sketch of you. Or, if you don't want to come to the big studio any more, I have a very quiet lodging, and not a soul would find it out if you came to me; you may be sure no one would do you any harm, and I would give you a good reward—and you should choose what you would have."

While he was speaking she had never left off shaking

her head. What her expression was he could not see, for she had sunk her chin on her breast. Now she suddenly looked up at him and said, with a little laugh that became her charmingly, while she twisted her streaming hair into a thick knot : " I would just like to sit on horseback once, and ride round real fast in a circle."

" If it's nothing more than that," he laughed, " come ! Don't be afraid, but put your foot in the stirrup."

He bent down over her again, grasped her under the arm that she reached out to him, and swung up the light little figure as if it had been a feather ; then he let her down on the saddle before him and seized the bridle. She instantly clasped her arms tight round his body, and clung so close to him that for a moment she almost took his breath away, " Do you sit firmly?" he called to her. She nodded, and laughed softly to herself. Then he set his horse in motion and began to ride round in a circle, at first slowly, then faster and faster, and she sat before him on the saddle without moving, and pressed her head close against his breast.

" Is that what you like?" he cried ; " or shall I stop?"

She did not answer.

" How would it be," he said, " if now I should trot back to town with you, and not draw rein until I came to my house? You would have to come with me, then, whether you wanted to or not, and do what I asked you. Aren't you quite in my power now?"

He reined in the horse for a moment, as though to give her opportunity to settle herself for a longer ride. But suddenly he felt how her arms unclasped, and in the next instant she had slid down from the saddle, and stood before him in the dusk, out of breath and rearranging her light dress.

"I thank you very much," she said. "It was very jolly ; but, now, that's enough. And all the rest is nonsense, and so, good-night ! If you can catch me again you may keep me !"

In a second she had sprung away and disappeared behind the nearest houses. Even if he had been seriously inclined to follow her, he would never have been able to find her trail again among the gardens and hedges that bordered the field.

A few passers-by had watched this singular performance from the avenue. He heard all sort of jokes that he did not understand. "Thank God !" he said to himself, "if I had allowed myself to do such a thing in my own dear home, the whole town would be talking of nothing else to-morrow, besides adding all sorts of exaggerations. But here—'Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's sein !' Long live golden liberty !"

He rode back to town in merry mood. He imagined that he could still feel the arms of the girl about his breast, and her warm breath on his face. His blood had not been cooled by his ride, as he had hoped, and the sharp trot to which he spurred on his horse did not help him. He gave up the reeking horse at the riding-school, and then turned into the Briennerstrasse, in order to sit awhile in the Court Garden, and eat an ice and nurse his dreams.

When he came back to the house where Julie lived, he checked himself suddenly. Who was that standing motionless by the garden fence, with his eyes fixed on the bright parterre window ? Jansen ?

Felix made a wide circuit to avoid him, and stood looking at him on the other side of the street in the shadow of the houses. For a good half hour he saw his

friend opposite continue at his post. Then the window was closed by a heavy curtain, and, immediately after, the watcher at the gate tore himself away and departed slowly.

Felix did not follow him. He scorned to be a spy on the secret ways of his friend. What chance had disclosed to him gave him enough to think about for to-day, without being able to find a solution to the riddle.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

It was unusually still in Angelica's studio, so still that one could plainly hear, through the thin wall that separated her from her neighbor, the cheerful squeak of his white mice. This was always a sign that their master was, as he expressed it, on the rampage, wielding his brush in the thick of the battle of Lützen.

Angelica, too, was very busy. But although she usually liked to chat over her work, to keep the people who sat to her from falling asleep, to-day she rarely opened her lips. It was the last sitting; the last touch, which, after all, is always a new beginning, was to be given to the picture—every stroke of the brush decided the fate of a *nuance*, the success or failure of an expression.

In order to work more surely, she had put on a pair of spectacles, that can scarcely be said to have improved her appearance, and the painting-jacket, on the left sleeve of which she was accustomed to wipe her brush, had burst open in the ardor of her work, and, with her lance-like maulstick and her shield-like palate, gave a certain pugnacious aspect to her good, honest face, as if she were engaged in a struggle for the release of the enchanted princess who sat in a chair opposite her, and who was also unusually quiet. Whether Julie was turning over in her

mind some especially serious thought, or had, like all people sitting to a painter, merely fallen under the influence of a certain absent-minded melancholy, it was impossible to make out.

She was especially beautiful to-day. Instead of her raw-silk dress, she wore a lighter stuff of transparent black, through which gleamed her white neck. Angelica had planned this in order that all the light might be concentrated on the face; and the arrangement of the hair, which left the contour of the head fully visible and allowed a few simply-braided locks to flow over the shoulders, was a special invention of the artist. Now, in the steady light, the dead white of her complexion, and the soft blond of her hair, shone out so gently subdued and yet so clear, and the eyes, under the brown lashes, had, with all their softness, such a fiery sparkle, that one could appreciate Angelica's assertion that a thing of this sort could not be painted—gold, pearls, and sapphires were the only materials with which to rival this fusion of color.

It is true, the first bloom of youth was passed. A keen eye could detect a wrinkle here and there, a certain sharpness of feature, and the easy grace with which her noble figure moved left no doubt that she had passed those years when a girl is always turning this way and that, like a bird on a branch, as if always on the point of fluttering away into the unknown, tempting, beautiful life outside, or else glancing eagerly around to see whether a hunter or trapper is in sight.

For that matter it would have been hard to conceive that this still, reserved, charming creature had ever committed the usual school-girl follies. But as soon as she began to speak, and especially to laugh, her expressive

face beamed with youthful merriment, her eyes, which were a little near-sighted, slightly closed and took on a mischievous look, and only her firm mouth retained its expression of thoughtful determination. "The rest of your face," said Angelica at the very first sitting, "was given you by God; for your mouth you must thank yourself."

She had intended by this remark to lead up to a conversation about careers and experiences; but the only answer was a meaning, yet reserved, smile from the mouth of which she spoke. Angelica was a girl of delicate feeling; she was naturally burning with curiosity to learn more of the past life of her admired conquest. But, after the repulse of her first attempts, she was much too proud to beg for a confidence that was not proffered. For this self-denial she was to-day to be rewarded, for Julie suddenly opened her lips, and said with a sigh:

"You are one of the happiest human beings I ever knew, Angelica."

"Hm!" replied the artist. "And why do I seem so?"

"Because you are not only free, but know how to make some use of your freedom."

"If it were only a good use! But do you really believe, dear Julie, that my pictures of 'flower, fruit, and thorn pieces,' and my bungling attempts to imitate God's likeness, have made me imagine that I am an especially interesting example of my class? Dearest friend, what you call happiness is really only the well-known 'German happiness'—a happiness, because it is not a greater unhappiness—a happiness of necessity."

"I can well understand," continued Julie, "that a moment never comes when one feels perfectly contented;

when one, so to speak, has reached the summit of the mountain, and looks around and says : there is nothing higher than this, unless one steps straight into the clouds. But yet you love your art, and I think you can busy yourself all day, your whole life long, with anything you love—”

“If I only knew whether it loved me in return ! Don’t you see, there lies the rub ; a most ‘devilish’ rub, Herr Rosebud would say. Are you really consecrated to art—I mean consecrated by the grace of God—when, if it hadn’t been for the merest chance in the world, you would never have touched a brush ? ”

“You would never have touched a brush ! ”

“Certainly ; but instead of it a common kitchen-spoon and similar household utensils. Why do you look at me incredulously ? Do you think I have been all my life a plain old maid ? I, too, was once seventeen years old, and by no means ill-looking—naturally not to be compared to what is now sitting opposite me—not a regular feature in my whole pretty face, no form, no style, merely the ordinary *beauté du diable*. But, if one may trust certain evidences—though my archives of sonnets, ball-favors, and other delicate offerings of the sort are burned, to be sure—I was as neat and attractive a young person as thousands of others. I had plenty of mother wit, you could read in my eyes that I had a good heart, and, besides, I was by no means poor. Why should I have lacked suitors ? No, my dear, I even had a choice ; and although I do not now understand why I preferred one particular mortal to all others, I must have known well enough at the time. I dimly remember how wonderfully happy, joyous, and in love I was ! If all had gone on in the beaten track, I should probably have al-

ways been as happy and as much in love—constancy is my chief fault—even if no longer so joyous. But this was not to be. My betrothed was drowned while bathing—just think of it, what an absurd misfortune! I was driven into a brain fever by the shock and grief; when I got up from it my little *beauté du diable* had gone to the *diable*. The next few years were spent as a widowed bride, in tears; and, when these gradually ceased to flow, I was a plain, prematurely-faded person, with a heart to be sure that had never yet fairly blossomed out, but about which no one troubled himself particularly. It was at that time also that we lost our little property, and I was obliged to take up with some pursuit or other; then it turned out to be good luck that even as a child at school I had wasted much time on drawing and painting. Do you believe, dear friend, that a virtue which one makes in this way out of a necessity—no matter how deserving it may be—can ever make a mortal thoroughly happy at heart?”

“Why not, when all kinds of happiness come with it, as has been the case with you? You visited Italy with that kind old lady about whom you told me such nice stories the other day; you can work at your art here in perfect freedom, without anxiety, thanks to the legacy of your motherly friend; you live in this beautiful city, in the society of friends and colleagues in art by whom you are respected—is all that nothing?”

“True, it is a great deal, and yet—I will whisper something in your ear—let it be entirely between ourselves, and if I did not love you so unreasonably that you might ask anything of me I would sooner bite off my tongue than confess it to any living mortal—if I should become, in the course of time, as celebrated as my

namesake (whose pictures, it must be confessed, always appear to me to be very stupid), or even should in so far succeed as to become contented with myself as an artist, I would give up all this exceptional good fortune for an ordinary, humdrum happiness ; a good husband, who need not even be a remarkable combination of excellences, and a few pretty children, who, for all I care, might be a little bit boisterous and naughty. There, now you know all about it, and you will laugh at me because I so naively confessed to you what we women generally hide like a sin."

"You would certainly have made a splendid housewife," said Julie, musingly. "You are so good, so warm-hearted, so unselfish ; you might have made a husband very happy. I—when I compare myself with you—but why shouldn't we call each other '*du?*' I have had all sorts of unpleasant experiences with women friends with whom I have used that familiar form, and that is the reason I have been so slow about it with you—. Stop, stop, you must leave my head on my shoulders!—you are squeezing me to death—if I had only known it sooner ! And who knows but what if you learn to know me better—."

The artist had thrown away palette and maulstick, and had, after her enthusiastic fashion, rushed upon the adored friend who had at last made this return for her worship.

"If I should know you a hundred years, I'll take care to love you a hundred times more dearly !" she cried, as, kneeling down before Julie, she folded her hands in her lap with a droll vivacity, and gazed reverentially through her spectacles at the beautiful face.

"No," said her friend earnestly, "you do not really know me yet. Have you any suspicion that by my own

fault I have thrown away that happiness for which you long, because, even as my best friends said, I was heartless?"

"Nonsense!" cried Angelica. "You heartless? Then I am a crocodile and live on human flesh!"

Julie smiled.

"Were they right? Perhaps. I don't believe it myself. But you know it is such a universal fashion to show one's self 'full of heart,' to express feeling, sympathy, tenderness, even when one remains perfectly cold, that the Cordelias will always be at a disadvantage. Even when very young, and perhaps by inheritance from my father, who was a strict, and on the surface a severe, old soldier, not much given to demonstrations—even when a school-girl I felt a disgust for sweetness and suavity, for affected sentimentality and humility—for all that conventional amiability behind which the most cruel envy, the most icy egotism, lurk concealed. I could never take kindly to sentimental bosom-friendship, to compacts of the heart for life and death, that were suddenly broken up by a ball-room rivalry, an honest reproof, or even by pure *ennui*. My first experience in this respect was my last. And how much sincere liking, and fidelity, and unappreciated self-sacrifice I wasted on this child's play! From that time forth I knew how to take better care of myself. And, in truth, it was not difficult for me to keep guard over my heart. I lived with my old parents, who both appeared, on the surface, dry and pedantic; but who understood the art of making for themselves and me a rich, warm, and beautiful life, that gave my thoughts and feelings ample nourishment. I modeled myself after them, and spoke much the same language. I must indeed have borne myself rather strangely, when, in the

society of young people, I expressed myself with regard to certain conventional feelings in scornful terms which might have been pardoned to an old soldier, but which did not become his daughter. I meant no harm with it all. On many occasions, when others were moved to tears or enthusiasm, I really experienced no sensation whatever, unless it were a feeling of discomfort. But as often as anything really touched me—beautiful music, a poem or some solemn impression of Nature, I became perfectly dumb, and could not join in the enthusiastic prattle that went on in the circle about me. Out of pure contempt for phrases, I assumed, in defiance of my real feelings, to be cool and critical, and had to bear being told that there was no getting on with me, that these secret joys must always remain closed to me, a girl without a heart. I smiled at this, and my smile confirmed these fine-strung souls in their belief in my lack of feeling. As it so happened that I found none of them all amiable enough to love in spite of these bad practices, I didn't care in the least for my isolation. I had fared thus with my own sex, and soon I was to find that I did not succeed much better with young men. I was not long in observing that the stronger sex merely had other, and by no means more amiable, weaknesses than we; above all, that they were much vainer, and so care most for those of us who are willing to do homage to their manly superiority. What is generally called maidenly modesty, womanly tenderness, and virginal feeling—is it not, in ninety cases out of a hundred, a craftily-planned artificial stratagem for making fools of these mighty lords of creation? Here they find what they want. Do they not meet in this pliant, yielding, dependent being the best supplement to their dominant natures, the most touching

submission to their higher will, an accurately-toned echo of all their most excellent wishes and thoughts? Afterward, when the purpose of the pretty comedy has been attained, the mask is laid aside quickly enough; we good lambs show that we, too, have a will and a mind and a power of our own, and the beautiful delusion is rudely dissipated. As soon as I had come to clearly recognize this, I felt the bitterest disgust for it. Soon, however, I was forced to laugh, and to say to myself, this farce is as old as the world! If, notwithstanding this, the proud lords of creation still permit themselves to be deceived, they must, in one way or another, find some advantage in it. But I could not even then bring myself to join in the game, as I saw all the rest do. I cared nothing for the object which made these petty means holy to all the others. Merely to please the men in general? To do this I had no need to exert myself especially, for I resembled my mother, who had passed for a beauty. And to have won the *love* of a man it would have been necessary for him to have first taken *my* fancy, for him to have first become dangerous to *me*. But it never came to that. Really, I often thought, have you a heart, or have you none, since it feels nothing at all in the society of these gay officers, students, and artists, who are such good dancers, have such a triumphant mien, and such faultless white cravats, and who, with the most condescending superiority, allow themselves to be enticed into the snare by all these timid, blushing, demure, sweet creatures, who are all the while secretly laughing in their sleeves."

Julie paused for a while with downcast eyes. "It is strange," said she, with a sigh, "how we happened to come upon these old stories! You must know, my dear, they are *really* very old—older than you think. I shall

soon be thirty-one years old ! When I first began to make these observations I was eighteen—now you can subtract for yourself. If I had married then, I might now have had a daughter twelve years old. Instead of that I am a well-preserved old maid, and my only admirer is a silly painter, who has fallen in love with me merely out of a whim for color.”

“No,” said Angelica, who, in the mean time, had zealously gone on with her painting, “I won’t be put aside in that way. I always did consider the men pretty stupid, because, as you very rightly said, they allow themselves to be caught by such clumsy tricks and artifices. But that they should not have recognized your worth, that they should not have cut each others’ throats about you—as they did before Troy for that Grecian witeh—that is really incomprehensible to me ! They cannot all be so conceited and foolish ; and, after all, there must be a few—I, myself, have known one or two—. But please lower your chin just a trifle.”

“Yes, it is true,” continued Julie, “there are a few. I have even come across one for whose sake I myself might finally have been induced to take part in the comedy, had not all talent for that kind of thing been denied me. What his name was, how he came to know me, cannot matter to you. He long ago married another, and has probably forgotten all of me but my name—if not that. I—one of us never forgets such an experience, even when it lies dead and buried in some corner of our hearts ; for that I had a heart, as well as other people, I discovered at that time only too plainly—I pleased him exceedingly—he took care to let me see this on every occasion—and then he really was better by far, and much less infected by conceit and selfishness than most of the

others ; and my straight-forward way of showing myself just as I was, without affecting any coquettish sensibility, seemed to be attractive to him because of its very rarity. As he was rich, and my parents were well off, there was, on the other hand, no outward hinderance in our way. And so, although no binding words had been exchanged, we were tacitly looked upon as a match—I think the men relinquished me to him much more honestly than my female friends gave up this much-sought man to me. To be sure I myself was, even in this case, at least outwardly much cooler and more reserved than happy lovers generally. I was, at heart, deeply attached to the man of my choice ; but there was always mixed with it a silent fear, a sort of lack of sympathy—perhaps a prophetic impulse of my heart that warned me not to give myself up absolutely and entirely to this love. And, one day, during a conversation about an accident in a Brazilian mine, where fifty men had suddenly been killed by an explosion of fire-damp, the storm burst upon me, and I had to suffer with those distant victims. All were deeply lamenting over the occurrence, as is the fashion. I remained silent ; and when my betrothed asked me whether the terrible accident had absolutely petrified me, I said I could not help it, but it affected me very little more than if I had read in some history that in some battle, a thousand years ago, ten thousand men had perished. The misery of this world was so near us daily and hourly, and we were, for the most part, so culpably indifferent to it, that I could not understand why I should all of a sudden be expected to feel so much sympathy for a misfortune which only attracted attention because it was in the latest newspaper ; and which was, moreover, a very common one and not even accompanied by especially horrible circumstances.

I had scarcely said this when they all fell upon me—at first, of course, in a joking way, and my old nickname—‘the heartless girl’—was raked up again; but, as I kept quiet and rather sharply repelled the accusations of these delicate souls, their tempers became more and more aroused, and the most zealous sermons on philanthropy were launched at me by the very ones who would not have given a drink of water to a sick dog, and who would only succor a poor man if it didn’t make them too much trouble. My friend, too, had grown silent, after having at first attempted to take my part. But, like a thorough man—for such he always remained—he could not conceal from himself the frightful truth that I was by no means sufficiently soft and womanly in my feelings. My combative spirit began to trouble him more and more—I could see this clearly—but now all my pride was enlisted against any smoothing over or suppression of my true nature. Although I was very near bursting into tears, I kept up my bravery, fought out my case, and had the miserable satisfaction of appearing to bear off the victory. A dearly-purchased victory! From this evening my lover perceptibly began to draw back, my ‘best friend’ took it upon herself to enlighten him more and more concerning my character; and since she herself possessed those very traits which were lacking in me, and which alone, it is said, can guarantee the happiness of marriage, nothing could be more natural than that before three weeks were up he should become engaged to this sympathetic being, who for thirteen years now has—. But I will say nothing bad of her. She has certainly done *me* a great service, for, perhaps, I might not have made this man much happier. And, at the time, she spared me a hard spiritual struggle. Had I been actually engaged, I might, perhaps, have hesi-

tated to fulfill the duties that my poor mother had a right to demand of me. For you must know that my father died very suddenly, and then it appeared that the mother of the heartless girl—who also passed for a cold character—concealed a much more passionate love under an austere exterior than most old women are accustomed to retain beyond their silver-wedding. The death of her old husband first threw my mother into a serious illness, and then into a half-wandering state, in which she lived on for many years, to her torture and to mine !”

She paused ; then she suddenly stood up and stepped to the artist’s side behind the easel.

“Pardon me, dear,” she said, “but I think you ought to stop. Every additional stroke of the brush that tones down or paints away anything will make it look less like me. Look at me more carefully—am I really that blooming creature that beams upon the world from out that canvas ? Twelve years of denial, loneliness, and living entombment, have they left no trace upon my face ? That is the way I might have looked, perhaps, had I known happiness. They say, you know, happiness preserves youth. But I—I am horribly old ! And yet, in reality, I have not begun to live !”

She turned hastily away and walked to the window.

Angelica laid aside her palette, went softly up to her, and threw her arm about her agitated friend.

“Julie,” said she, “when *you* speak that way—you, who by a mere smile could tame wild animals and drive tame men mad !”

She turned to her comforter, and the tears stood in her eyes.

“Oh, my dear,” she said, “what nonsense you are talking ! How often I have envied a young peasant girl, with

an ugly, stupid face, who brought us eggs and milk, simply because she could come and go as she liked, and moved among living beings ! But I—can you conceive what it means to have constantly at your side a being whom you cannot but love, and yet whom you are forced to look upon as one dead, as a living ghost ; to hear the voice that once caressed you utter senseless sounds, to see the eye that once beamed on you so warmly, strange and dimmed—the eye, the voice, of your own mother ? And this, year in and year out—and this half-dead being only waked into anxiety and agitation whenever I made an attempt to leave her. For, truly, when I had borne it a year, I thought I was being crushed by it, without feeling the satisfaction that the sacrifice of my life could be of any possible service to this most miserable being. Yet as often as she missed me for a longer time than the few hours daily to which she had become accustomed, she lapsed into the most violent uneasiness, and only became quiet again when she saw me once more. I had to reconcile myself to the idea that I was necessary to her existence—to an existence that I could by no possibility make happy, or enliven, or even lighten. For so long as I was at her side she scarcely noticed me ; indeed, she often appeared not even to recognize me. And still she could not exist without me ; and in the asylum, to which she was once carried for the sake of an experiment, she lapsed into a state so pitiable that even ‘a girl without a heart’ could not but be moved by it.”

“Horrible ! And you lived with her in this way for twelve long years ?”

“For twelve long years ! Does it still seem to you so incomprehensible, so ‘stupid’ of the men that they did not positively force themselves upon a girl who would

have brought, with a little bit of beauty and property, this face into their house? No, dear, the men are not so stupid, after all. Even if I had been engaged, and had loved my lover with my whole heart, I could never have expected him to join his life to that of a woman who was chained fast to so horrible a lot."

"But now, since you have become free—"

"Free! A fine freedom to be allowed to dance when the ball is over, to console myself with artificial or painted flowers for the rosy time that was neglected. I once read somewhere that happiness is like wine; if one does not drink up the entire cask at once, but pours some of it into bottles, some time one will have the good of it. It will have time to ripen and become nobler, if it is of the right sort. There may be some truth in this; but, no matter how noble it may be, the old wine has lost its bouquet. The happiness that one hasn't enjoyed when young has a bitter taste; and, for that matter, who guarantees that I shall ever slake my thirst again? Many thousands never moisten their lips, and live soberly on. Why should I fare better? Because I have more beauty than many! That would be fine, indeed! Fate is not in the least gallant, and draws up its decrees without regard to persons. Now, when I stand before the glass, I always see the same well-known face that has lost its youth. I seem to myself like a silk dress that has hung in the closet for twelve years. When one takes it out it is still silk, but the color has faded, the folds tear when it is touched, and when it is shaken out fly the moths! But I have let enough of them fly out of my head to-day. There is no use in going over old experiences. Come! we will paint a little more, and then go and take a drive—for what is our glorious liberty for?"

CHAPTER II.

IN Jansen's studio, too, there was more talking than working going on this morning.

Edward Rossel had, at last, in spite of the heat, summoned up sufficient energy to undertake the short walk thither. A gigantic Panama hat, over which he also held a sunshade, protected his head; besides this he wore a summer suit of snow-white piqué, and light shoes of yellow leather.

He was in a very good humor, praised Felix for the assiduity with which he continued to study his skeleton, and then stepped up to the Dancing Girl, to which Jansen had just put the finishing touches.

He stood silently before it for some time, then he drew up a chair near it and begged Jansen to turn the stand so that he would be able to view the work from all sides.

His friends declared that it was a pleasure to see him look at anything. His glances seemed to fairly fasten upon the form, or rather to take it all in; all the muscles of his face became animated, and an intellectual tension curved his somewhat languid mouth.

"Well," asked Jansen, at last, "how does it strike you? You know I can bear anything."

"*Est, est, est!* What is there to be said about it, especially? Naturally, it has gained and lost, as is always the case. The innocent audacity, the Pompeian *abandon*, that charmed me in the little sketch has, as a whole, suffered in the execution. You might do better, perhaps, to disguise your respect for Nature a little more. And,

by-the-way—with all respect for this Nature—what sort of a model did you have? Of course it is very strongly idealized?”

“Not in the least. A pure *facsimile*.”

“What? This neck and breast, these shoulders, arms—”

“A conscientious copy, without any additions.”

Fat Rossel stood up.

“I should have to see that to believe it,” he said. “Look here, compared with this the conventionalities of Canova are mere wretched sugar-work. And that is what I was just going to say to you—the Grecian element that was in the sketch is gone. In its place there are a grace, an *esprit*, an elegance of form—and that, too, of a spontaneous sort. Don’t you find it so, my dear baron? You are a lucky man, Hans, to have such a being run into your hands. In what garden did this little slip grow?”

Jansen shrugged his shoulders.

“Come, out with it, old Jealousy! You need not lend her to me for any length of time—only for one forenoon. I happen to have a composition in mind, for which this little one—”

“You will have to run after luck more persistently than the law of your laziness permits,” added Jansen, quietly. “I myself didn’t catch it by the forelock this time without some trouble; and, although this forelock is very thick, and shone before me in the most beautiful red—”

“Red hair? Now no dodges will help you, Jansen, you must hand her over to me. Something of this sort has floated before my fancy for weeks past—something of the wood-nymph, water-nymph nature.”

“Hand her over! But it isn’t in my power. Friend

Felix happened to drop in, the second time she was with me. She took this so to heart that, since then, she has disappeared, leaving no traces behind her."

"Is there virtue under this beautiful exterior? So much the better. Nature will enjoy her natural bounds all the longer, and so virtue will also tend to the benefit of art. Tell me where she lives—the rest shall be my care."

He noted down the address, which was written in charcoal on the wall near the window, and then advanced toward the large, veiled group in the middle of the studio.

"How far have you got with the Eve?"

"Unfortunately, I can't show her to you to-day," replied Jansen, quickly. "She is just at a stage—"

"What the devil!" laughed Fat Rossel; "this looks very dangerous! How long is it since you have fastened your cloths down with safety pins? Don't you want the priests to snuff around here when they wander in from the saint-factory?"

A knock on the door relieved Jansen from the evident embarrassment of answering. The door opened, and Angelica, in her painting-jacket and with her brush behind her ear, just as she had come from her easel, appeared on the threshold.

"Good-day, Herr Jansen," she said. "Ah! I am disturbing you. You have company. I will come again later—I merely had a favor to ask."

"And you hesitate to give utterance to this request before a colleague and old admirer?" cried Rossel, going up to the artist and gallantly kissing her hand. "If you only knew, Fräulein Angelica how this undeserved slight hurt my tender heart!"

"Herr Rossel," continued the artist, "you are a scoffer, and, as a punishment for boasting of a tender heart, which you do not possess, you shall not be given a chance to see something beautiful. I simply wished to request Herr Jansen to come and look at my picture, for I have just had my last sitting, and my friend has given me permission. She knows how important his judgment is to me."

"But if I vow to be very good, and not to open my mouth—"

"You have such a deprecating way of screwing up the corners—"

"I will hold my hat before my face—only my eyes shall peep over the rim."

"For Heaven's sake, come then! although I don't place much confidence in your most solemn vows. I place myself under Herr Jansen's protection; and if the Herr Baron would perhaps like to come too?"

Jansen had not spoken a word, but, with conspicuous haste had exchanged his frock for a coat and had washed the dust from his hands.

When they entered the studio above, they found Rosenbusch already engaged in the most enthusiastic admiration of the picture, while, at the same time, he endeavored in his chivalrous way, to bestow at least half of his enthusiasm upon the original.

Julie had risen and gone toward his chair. When she saw Angelica return with a triple escort, instead of the one she expected, she seemed slightly confused. But the next moment she greeted the gentlemen, whom Angelica introduced to her, with easy grace.

A pause followed. Jansen had stepped before the picture, and, with the great authority which he enjoyed

in this circle, not even Edward himself dared to say a word before he had expressed his opinion. It was Jansen's way not to reduce his impression immediately to words. But, on this occasion, he remained silent unusually long.

"Tell me frankly, dear friend," Angelica began at last, "that I have once more undertaken something that deserves the palm—for no other reason than for its audacity. If you only knew what contemptuous epithets I have heaped upon myself while I was painting! I have made myself out so bad, have so run myself down, that *Homo* would not take a piece of bread from me if he had heard me. And yet, in the midst of my dejection, I still took such unheard-of pleasure in my daubery that, do what I would, I could not let my courage sink. If my friend were not present, I should be able to explain to you the reason for this. As it is, it would seem in very bad taste if I should forthwith make her a declaration of love in the presence of witnesses."

The sculptor still remained silent. At last he said, dryly,

"You may set your mind at rest, Angelica. Don't you know very well that this is not only your best picture, but, moreover, a most excellent performance, such as one only too seldom meets with nowadays?"

A deep blush of joyful embarrassment suffused the good-natured, round face of the painter.

"Is that your candid opinion?" cried she. "Oh, my dear Jansen! if it only is not meant as a salve for the goadings of my own conscience—"

Jansen did not answer. He was once more deeply absorbed in the contemplation of the picture. Now and

then he cast a critical glance at the original, who stood quietly by and appeared to be thinking of other things.

In the mean while Edward labored zealously to efface the bad opinion that Angelica had formed of his love for critical mockery. He praised the work highly in detail—the drawing, the arrangement, the successful coloring, and the simple light effects, and what he found to criticise in the details of the technique only served to heighten the worth of his commendation as a whole.

“But, do you know,” he said, enthusiastically, “this is only one way to do it, a very skillful and talented way, but by no means the only one. What do you say, for instance, to dark-red velvet, a light golden chain around the neck, a dark carnation in the hair—*à la Paris Bordone*? or a gold brocade—I happen to have a magnificent genuine costume at home, that was sent to me last week from Venice? or shall we have simply the hair disheveled, a dark dress, behind it a laurel-bush—”

“And so on, with graces *in infinitum*!” laughed the painter. “You must know, Julie, this gentleman has already painted thousands of the most magnificent pictures—unfortunately nearly all in imagination. No, my dear Rossel, we are obliged to you. We are only too glad to have accomplished it in this very modest way, and to have received so favorable a criticism. My dear friend, although she is an angel of patience, has had quite enough to do with the fine arts for some time to come.”

“O, Angelica!” sighed Rossel with comical pathos, “you are merely jealous: you will vouchsafe to no other person the good fortune that has been accorded to you. Now, what if I had always been waiting for just such a task, so that I, too, might produce something immortal?”

"You?—your laziness is all that is immortal about you!" replied the painter.

They continued for a while to chaff and plague one another, Rosenbusch and Felix also contributing their share. Jansen alone did not jest, and Julie, too, took advantage of her slight acquaintance to take no further part in the conversation than common politeness demanded.

After the men had gone, a long silence followed between the two friends. The artist had taken up her palette again, in order that she might, after all, make use of Rossel's hints. Suddenly she said :

"Well, how did he please you?"

"Who?"

"Why, of course, there can be only one in question : the one who exerted himself least to please anybody, not even you."

"Jansen? Why, I scarcely know him!"

"One knows such men in the first quarter of an hour, when one is as old as we two are. It is just that which distinguishes the great men and the thorough artists from the petty and the half-way ones—one knows the lion by his claws. Just one look, and you will believe him capable of the most incredible and superhuman things."

"I really believe, my dear, you are in—"

"Love with him! No. I am, at all events, sensible enough not to let anything so nonsensical as that enter my head. But, if he were to say to me : 'I should take it as a favor, Angelica, if you would just eat this bladder-full of flake-white for your breakfast,' or, 'if you would try to paint with your foot, it would afford me a personal pleasure,' I believe I should not hesitate a moment. I should think he must undoubtedly have his reasons for it,

and that I was only too stupid to comprehend them. Don't you see, such is my immovable faith in this unprecedented man, so impossible does it seem to me that he could do anything small, foolish, or even commonplace. Something horrible—yes, something monstrous and insane—I could believe him capable of, and who knows whether he has not really done something of the sort? He has something about him like a little Vesuvius, that stands there in the sun peacefully enough, and yet everybody knows what is boiling inside. His friends say of Jansen that, if the Berserker once breaks out in him, he is a bad man to deal with. I felt this from the first, with an unerring instinct, and I hardly dared to sneeze in his presence. Then I chanced to meet him in the garden, near the fountain, where he was combing his Homo, and showing himself pretty awkward at it. He struck me then as being so helpless that I could not help laughing and offering myself as a lady's maid for the dog, at which he showed great delight. That broke the ice between us, and, since then, I take the most inconceivable liberties with him, although my heart still continues to thump if he chances to look at me in his quiet, steady way, for a minute at a time."

Julie was silent. After some time she said, suddenly :

"It is true he has eyes such as I have never before seen in a man. One can read in those eyes that he is not happy ; all his genius cannot make him glad. Don't you find it so, too? Wonderfully lonely eyes ! Like a man who has lived long years in a desert, and has seen no living soul—nothing but earth and sun. Do you know anything of his life?"

"No. He himself never speaks of it. Nor do any of

the others know what he may not have gone through before he came to Munich. That was about five years ago. But now, if you will just sit still a moment longer—so!—it's only for the reflection in the left eye, and the re-touching about the mouth."

Then the painting went on for another hour in silence.

CHAPTER III.

ON the outskirts of the "English Garden" there lies, among other pleasure-resorts of its class, the so-called "Garden of Paradise." In the midst of a grove stands a large, stately building, at the laying of whose corner-stone no one would have ventured to predict that it would some day become a place of refuge for so mixed a company. Here, on summer days, merry and thirsty folk are wont to gather round the tables and benches, while a band plays from a covered platform. But the large hall on the ground floor of the house is generally used for dancing, while the lower side-wings are opened for spectators and for couples that are resting from the waltz.

It was eleven o'clock at night. A thunderstorm, that had gathered toward evening, had prevented the advertised garden-concert from taking place. When the storm had scattered again after a few harmless thunderclaps, the seats filled up very slowly; and the beer-drawer at the open booth among the trees had plenty of time to doze between the stray mugs that were handed in to him to be filled. For this reason the garden had been closed earlier than usual; and when it struck eleven the house

lay as still and deserted as though there were not a living being within.

And yet the long hall in the left wing, which was reached from the garden by a few steps, was, if not actually as light as day, at all events sufficiently illuminated by a dozen lamps along the wall. In the rear, where at this time scarcely any one passed through the deserted street, the upper, semicircular part of the windows was left open for the sake of ventilation, while the lower part remained tightly closed. Dark figures approached along the street, singly, or in groups of two or three just as they chanced to come together, and entered the house by the back door. On the side toward the English Garden everything remained as dark and lifeless as was ever an old wall behind which counterfeiterers ply their trade in dimly-lighted cellars.

The interior of the hall was, when seen by daylight, not altogether unornamented. The inspired hand of some house-painter had covered the wall spaces between the windows with bold landscape conceptions *al fresco*, where were to be seen, amid fabulous castles, cities, river-gorges, and wooded ravines, blue wanderers strolling about in green hats, and horsemen careering on chargers of very questionable anatomy, followed by dogs that belonged to no known race. In the dazzling blue sky above these outgrowths of a cheery decorator's fantasy, sometimes through a tree-top or the slanting pinnacle of a robber-castle, a society of carpenters' apprentices, which met here once a week, had driven large nails that they might hang up symmetrically their various diplomas, decorated with pictures and mottoes, and dotted with little balls.

But, on the night of which we speak, all this splendor had disappeared behind a thick veil of growing plants.

Tall evergreen bushes stood between the windows, and stretched their slender branches to the roof, so that the squalid walls seemed transformed into a tropical garden. A long, narrow table, with green, big-bellied flagons, occupied the middle of the room, and in a corner was a cask, about the polished tap of which hung a wreath of roses, while on a little table near by stood baskets with white rolls and a few plates of fruit.

Only a few dozen chairs surrounded the table, and these were not more than half occupied, when Jansen and Felix entered the room. Through the light haze of lamp-light and tobacco-smoke they could discern the pale face of Elfinger beside the battle-painter's blooming countenance ; the fez-covered head of Edward Rossel, comfortably reclining in an American rocking-chair and smoking a chibouque ; then one and another of the artists who had occasionally shown themselves in Jansen's studio. Nothing like a servant was anywhere to be seen ; and each, as soon as he had emptied his glass, went himself to the cask and filled it. Some strolled, chatting, along the green hedge up and down the hall ; others sat, absent and expectant, in their places, as though in a theatre before the beginning of the play ; and only Fat Rossel, who alone rejoiced in a comfortable seat, seemed to blow clouds of smoke up to the ceiling as if already in a true paradisaic frame of mind.

As Felix approached him, there arose at his side a tall, thin figure in a hunting-blouse, with high riding-boots, and a short French pipe between his lips. Once before, while walking in the street, Felix had caught a hasty glimpse of this singularly-shaped face, with its choleric complexion and its close-cropped hair, its coal-black imperial, and a broad scar across the right temple ; its owner

had been mounted on a handsome English horse, which had attracted his attention more than the rider. This man managed his lank limbs awkwardly and clumsily, as if he had lost his natural balance the moment that he ceased to feel his horse between his legs. Besides, he had a way of either continually pulling at his goatee, or of twitching the lobe of his right ear. Felix noticed that he wore a little gold ring in his left ear. The right one was disfigured; the earring, that had once been worn there, seemed to have been torn out by force at some time or other.

“I take the liberty of introducing myself,” said the lank individual, bowing to Felix with soldierly formality. “My name is Aloys von Schnetz, a first-lieutenant on the retired list; as a friend of the seven liberal arts, I am allowed the honor of entering this Paradise. Inasmuch as amphibious creatures undoubtedly existed even in the garden of God, therefore a being like myself, who occupies a middle place, at once an aristocrat and a proletarian, no longer a soldier, for good reasons, and also not an artist—unfortunately for still better reasons—may be said not to be out of place among good people, of whom each has some pretty definite aims and powers. You, too, as Fat Rossel has just confided to me, belong, to a certain extent, to my class, although I hope and trust that you represent a somewhat more edifying species. Come, take a seat here by my side. There are people who declare that I put them out of humor. I am accused of giving myself great pains to see the world as it is, and to call things by their right names; sensitive natures call that cynicism, and find it unpleasant. But you shall see it is not so bad, and here in Paradise I try to forget, as far as possible, that we pick sour apples from the tree of knowl-

edge. However, I ought, like a true amphibian, to conduct you, after so dry an introduction, into a moist element."

He set his long, Don-Quixote legs in motion toward the cask, filled two bumpers and brought them back to Felix.

"We have become converted to wine," he said, growling it out in a half ironical, half bitter tone; "although, strictly speaking, it is an anachronism, as it is well known that wine was given to mankind as a compensation for a *lost* Paradise. Beer, on the other hand, is entirely an invention of the darker middle ages, to make men mere idle slaves to the priests, and it has never yet occurred to any one to seek truth anywhere but in wine. So, then, here's to your health, and hoping that you may succeed better than I have in becoming one of these primitive men!"

Felix knocked glasses with his queer new friend, and then proceeded to observe the unknown persons who had in the mean while strolled in. Schnetz gave him their names. Most of them had passed their first youth. Only one boyish face, of a foreign cast, gazed dreamily with big, black eyes into the cloud of smoke that circled up from his cigarette. It was, Schnetz told his neighbor, that of a young Greek painter, twenty-two years old, who was, in spite of his delicate, almost girl-like appearance, a dangerous lady-killer. He was not really intimately acquainted with any of them, and only Rossel's intercession in his favor and his talent, which was by no means slight, had procured him the entrance into this circle.

A little, bent old man, with delicate features and snow-white hair, was the last to enter. He hung his hat and cloak on a nail, and took his seat in the only unoccupied

chair at the upper end of the table near Jansen, who gave him a kindly welcome.

Felix was surprised at the presence of an old man amid this rising generation. To be sure, Schnetz, too, was no longer a youth—he might well be over forty. But in every muscle of his sinewy figure throbbed a suppressed energy, while it was evident that the quiet, white-haired old man, who sat at the upper end of the table, had long since left behind him the storms and struggles of life.

“I see that you are puzzling your head about our ‘creator,’” said Schnetz, twisting his goatee. “For that matter I don’t know much more about his intimate affairs than I do about the personal experiences of the real Deity. That he is an artist, or rather that he was once—of that there can be no doubt. Every word that he utters, when the conversation turns upon art, proves this. He undoubtedly belongs, however, to a geological stratum whose fauna has died out. Nor has any one of us ever seen one of his works, or known how or where or from what he lives. His name is Schöpf; and when, three years ago, while our Paradise was still in its infaney, he was introduced here by Jansen—whom he had visited in his studio, and whose interest he had speedily known how to enlist—we permitted ourselves the cheap joke of twisting Schöpf into Schöpfer,¹ and at the same time of appointing him host and chief steward of the Paradise. At that time we still reveled in buffoonery of that sort, each of us bearing some kind of appropriate nickname; and we continued to keep this up until at last the cheap joke was run into the ground. But we had grown to like and respect the old man, who showed himself such a quiet and friendly provi-

¹ Schöpfer—creator—a pun somewhat less irreverent to German than it would sound to English ears.

dence that the first man could hardly have boasted of a better one. He looks after all our business affairs, takes charge of the society's treasury, selects our wine, and keeps an eye on the gardener who decorates our hall. With all this we see him but once a month. During the intervening period he vanishes. When we hold our masked ball, at which the *daughters* of Eve are also allowed to appear, he makes himself useful until the first stroke of the fiddle is given, and then he creeps off home again."

"It is hardly probable that he can be a native here, if he can play the *rôle* of a mysterious personage so easily."

"Don't you believe it. Here in Munich there are a large number of such subterranean existences, whose strange ways and dodges escape attention—ay, even common gossip—for the reason that here there is no society, in the true sense of the word. In every other city of equal, or even of greater size, one knows pretty well what his dear fellow-men are about; at least this is the case in regard to the notable ones who rise above the common level—one knows what they have to pay their tailor with, or how much they are owing him. But this place swarms with amphibious beings of both sexes who, when they are no longer able to keep above water, dive down into a more or less turbid element, where they become invisible. I myself have already had the honor of introducing myself to you as such a dual being; not that the ground is unsteady under my feet—I quitted the service of my own accord from personal motives—but the dryness up there on the surface became unbearable for me; I am one of the malcontents, of whom you see so many here, who have slammed the door in the face of so-

called good society, partly because it is insipid, partly because it is base, and who now, in paradisaic freedom, are trying to find their world in their friends. But your glass is still full! Come! You must do our Jordan more honor."

"A Jordan in Paradise? My geography does not go so far as that, or perhaps new discoveries have—"

Schnetz had just began to explain to him that this noble wine came from the vineyard of Herr Jordan at Deidesheim, and that for this reason they had agreed to transfer the river of the promised land into India on their maps, when Elfinger rose and informed them that it was "his turn" to-night, and that he had prepared something, but that first some sketches would be exhibited.

Upon this a number of studies were passed around the table, landscape sketches, and plans and designs of all kinds—among others the drawings of a young architect for the building of a special hall for the Paradise Club, which excited great applause, and called forth the most amusing propositions as to the manner in which funds should be raised to cover the cost of this most timely work.

In the mean while an insignificant-looking, lean man, with an awkward manner, and wearing a threadbare coat that was buttoned tight to conceal the absence of a waistcoat, had taken a large gray sheet of paper from a portfolio, had fastened it with tacks to the window-shutter, so that the lamps on the wall threw a pretty strong light upon it, and had then stepped back in order to invite an inspection of his work. It was a pen and ink sketch, full of figures, the lights touched up with white, but done with so complete a disregard of effect that the composition appeared, at the first glance, to be a strangely-con-

fused swarm, in which it was impossible to make out either the details or the plan as a whole.

“Our Cornelian, Philip Emanuel Kohle!” growled Schnetz. “Another of those unlucky erratic boulders in the midst of the flat common of our modern art, torn from the summit of some heaven-aspiring mountain, and then rolled, a strange intruder, into the fertile plain of mediocrity, where no one knows what to do with it. Let us go nearer. These outline fanatics scorn to produce an effect at a distance.”

“I have taken for my subject,” explained the artist, “a poem of Hölderlin’s—you undoubtedly all know it—Hyperion’s song of fate—or, if it has escaped your recollection—I have brought the text with me.”

Upon this he drew from his pocket a very dog-seared little book and read the verses, although he knew them by heart. As he proceeded his cheeks flushed, his eyes sparkled, and his whole meagre figure appeared to grow in height; and when he finished there was silence for a while in the group that was examining the drawing.

The artist still seemed to have an explanation to make, but he did not utter it: as if, after such words of genius, any prosaic paraphrase would be a desecration. And, indeed, the singular composition now sufficiently explained itself.

A mountain, whose base covered the whole lower breadth of the large sheet, rose up in jagged tiers like a tower, and ended in a smooth plateau, on which were seen reclining, veiled in a light cloud, the figures of gods assembled about a banquet table, while others, with winged feet, either strolled about singly or arm-in-arm, or amused themselves with dance and song. All seemed a dreamy, floating whirl of forms, heightened here and there by

abrupt foreshortenings of the long limbs and by angular effects of drapery. Among these Olympian figures, but separated by an impassable barrier of cloud and storm, could be seen the races of mankind, in the most various and spirited groups, suffering all the woes of mortals. Nearest the gods, and hallowed as it were by their proximity, children were playing and lovers were whispering ; but the paths that branched off soon led to scenes of suffering and misery, and certain symbolical figures, which were scattered in among the human forms at the principal passes of the mountain, made manifest the intention of the designer to represent both the effects and power of vice and passion, while the division into seven stages pointed to the seven deadly sins. A solemn, unbending earnestness, and a certain loftiness in their submission to this downfall—

“Through long years into the uncertain depths below”—

gave to this somewhat unwieldy composition a great depth of feeling which animated even what was grotesque, and impressed upon the stronger parts the unmistakable stamp of a great mind.

The mere number of the figures occupied the attention for a long time ; then followed all sorts of criticism, which the designer bore without contradiction—no one knew whether from defenselessness or secret obstinacy. For Jansen’s opinion only did he watch with eagerness, who, after his usual fashion, allowed the others to talk, while he merely pointed now and then with an eloquent finger to some defective spot.

The only one who had remained quietly seated, and who had looked at the sheet across the table and down

the whole length of the hall, through a little ivory opera-glass, was Edward.

At length Rosenbusch, whose high tenor had rung out in enthusiastic expressions of praise above all the confusion of voices, turned to him.

"What!" he cried, in a hearty tone of challenge, "will not the blessed gods rouse themselves this once from their reclining-place, and cast a gracious look upon this work of a mortal?"

"Pardon me, my dear Rosebud," replied Fat Rossel, lowering his voice so that he should not be heard by Kohle; "you know I like to have what is beautiful come to me, instead of having to run painfully after it; and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel made the most profound impression upon me, because a man can only enjoy it thoroughly lying on his back. Concerning this last heaven-towering monument of thought, that my godfather has set up"—for so he had persisted in calling him ever since he had aptly, though ironically, christened one of his unnamed, thoughtful drawings, and Kohle had accepted the title in sober earnest—"concerning this I am not gymnast enough to follow his motives up seven stories high without growing giddy. However, when you have all finished, I will draw up a chair in front of it and go to work; or, to tell the truth, I should prefer to do it to-morrow alone with him."

"I should be very glad, Rossel, if I might bring you the sketch to-morrow," stammered the pale man, who had probably overheard the scoffing words, and had blushed deeply.

"Would you really like it, godfather?" said Edward, with a shake of the head. "No, my good friend, if my heresies have reached your ears after all, let us come to

an honorable understanding ; and here in Paradise, at all events, let us wear no cloaks. You know that all paintings that represent thought make my head ache ; that, to my mind, a single thoughtless Venus of Titian outweighs a whole Olympus full of spiritual motives, such as swarm about like ants over your big pound-cake of an allegorical mountain. Yes, we are old antipodes, my dear godfather ; which fact, by-the-way, does not lessen our friendship. On the contrary, when I see how you and your creations are losing flesh through pure intellect, I feel a hearty compassion mingled with my esteem. You should try a milk-cure, my good godfather, at the full breasts of our old mother Nature ; you should follow the flesh for a year or so, instead of high ideas—”

“It is not every tree that has its bark full grown,” interposed Kohle, meekly.

“True. But a tree that has no bark at all !—and, you see, that’s just how your whole style appears to me, you mighty disciple of Cornelius ! We see the complicated structure of your thoughts, we see how the sap of your ideas circulates through it ; all of which is very remarkable and edifying, but anything rather than artistic. For ought not true art to work upon us like a higher Nature, without putting forth much ingenuity and subtilty, without all that complication of poetical affinities and philosophical *finesse* ? No, it should be simple and plain, but purified by the flame of genius from all weakness, all defects, and every kind of wretchedness. For instance, in the contemplation of a beautiful woman, lying there so quietly, or of a stately senator, or of an ‘Adoration of the Kings,’ how much does one think about the ingenuity of the thing ? Either it conveys no meaning, or an incomprehensible one, or even an unprofitable one. And

yet it charms us, even across the whole width of the hall, merely by its *silhouette*, or its wealth of color, or its simple and majestic sensuous beauty, such as we seldom or never find in Nature without some vulgar adjunct. On the other hand, take a poem in picture like the one before us—I invariably find myself searching at the foot of the frame to see whether the draughtsman has not added some notes that may serve to explain the text. A printed paper answers the whole purpose quite as well, something entitled ‘The picture and its description ;’ and the dear Philistine who talks about the ‘arts of culture’—because he thinks it is with his own special culture that they have to do—is only too happy if he can imagine that he is going through some connected process of thought while he looks at it. But *I* say, long live the art that leaves no room for thought ! And, now, give me something to drink !”

Schnetz filled his glass for him, which he drained at one draught as if he were exhausted by his long oration. A painful silence had ensued ; the depreciatory tone in which the words had been spoken had depressed even those who were of Rossel’s way of thinking. At length a mild and somewhat husky voice was heard proceeding from the upper end of the table, and they saw that old Schöpf had taken upon himself to defend the cause of the party attacked.

“You are undoubtedly right in the main, Herr Rossel,” said he. “In the great epochs of art—among the Greeks, and the Italians of the *cinque-cento*—mind and Nature were inseparably united. But, unfortunately, they have quarreled since then, and it is quite as rare to find a painter of the so-called fleshly school who knows how to give soul to his form as it is to find a poet among

draughtsmen who succeeds perfectly in incorporating his conceptions. In fact it is a period of extremes, of specialities, and of strife. But is not strife the father of things? Shall we not hope that from this chaos a new and beautiful world will crystallize? And, until then, should we not give every one a chance who fights with honest weapons and open visor? What if there are artists who have more to say than can be shown? Who cannot look upon their inner life in such a spirit of tranquil beauty, but see in it a tragedy which must work itself out in discords? And, indeed, the life of man, as it is to-day, has passed out of the idyllic stage; on every side we see intellect leading the van, and enjoyment and pleasure limping after. An art that shows no traces of this, would that still be *our* art?"

"Let it be whatever it liked," cried Fat Rossel, leisurely rising; "it would be my art at all events. But, naturally, that need matter little to you. And by the way—I have not once shaken hands with you this evening, my lord and creator. I do so now, and at the same time I thank you for so bravely dragging my excellent godfather Kohle from out the fray. He himself likes to keep his best thoughts in his own breast, unless he has a chance to sketch them on a sheet of paper. And here in Paradise no one ought to fall upon his fellow-man in the murderous fashion that I just did. Kohle, I esteem you. You are a character, and have the courage of your convictions, in defiance of all the lusts of the flesh. I thank you, especially, for that poem of Hölderlin's, that I confess I did not know, and that is very fine; how does it go? . . ."

He seated himself with the greatest good-nature by the side of his "godfather," and began to go thoroughly over the sketch, and to make a number of keen criticisms

of its details. In the mean time the young Greek had placed in position a large sketch in colors, dashed off in bold, strong lines ; and now this took its turn of criticism.

It had for its subject, as the artist explained in broken German, in a soft, musical voice, a scene from Goethe's "Bride of Corinth." The youth had sunk back upon his couch, and his ghostly bride had thrown herself vampire-like upon him, "eagerly drinking in the flame of his lips," while the mother, standing outside the door, seemed to be listening to the suppressed voices, just ready to burst in and disturb the pair.

Over this work also criticism held its breath for a time, though for a very different reason. The whole picture breathed such a stifling spirit of sultry passion that even the members of the Paradise Club, who most certainly were not prudish, seem to feel that the bounds of what was permissible had been overstepped.

Once more Rosenbusch was the first to speak.

"There he sits over yonder in the realm of pure spirit," he cried to Fat Rossel, who was still studying Kohle's work, "while we here are dealing with pure flesh. Holla ! You man of the silhouette and the beautiful decorative form, come over here and exorcise this demon !"

Edward nodded without looking round ; he seemed to know the work already, and to have no desire to express himself concerning it.

As none of the others uttered a single word, the artist finally appealed directly to Jansen, and begged for his judgment.

"Hm !" growled the sculptor, "the work is full of talent. Only you have christened it wrongly—or have forgotten the two veils."

“Christened it wrongly?”

“In the name of Goethe; Saint Priapus stood god-father to it.”

“But—the two veils!” stammered the youth, who had cast down his eyes.

“Beauty and horror. Only read the poem. You will see how artistically everything immodest in it is veiled by these two. And yet—a decidedly talented work. It will find admirers fast enough.”

He turned away and went quietly back to his seat. At the same instant the young man tore the picture from the wall, and, without saying a word, held the gilt frame in which it was enclosed over the nearest lamp.

Perhaps he had expected that some one would seize him by the arm; but no one stirred. The flame seized eagerly upon the canvas. When a part was consumed, the young man swung himself upon the window-sill and hurled the burning picture through the upper part of the window, which was open, into the dark garden below, where it fell hissing on the damp gravel.

Upon springing down again he was greeted with general applause, which he received with a gloomy brow and compressed lips. His hasty act had evidently given him no inward relief. Nor could even Jansen’s kind greeting succeed immediately in banishing his sinister mood. It was his innermost nature that he had consigned to this fiery death.

Felix, upon whom this curious incident had made a deep impression, was just on the point of going up to the youth, whom he saw standing apart from the others and enveloping himself in a dense cloud of tobacco smoke, when a clock in one of the church steeples near by an-

nounced, with its twelve slow strokes, that the hour of midnight had arrived.

On the instant all conversation was hushed, the chairs were drawn up in line ; and it then occurred to Felix, for the first time, that Elfinger, whose "turn" it was this evening, had left the hall some little time before, in company with Rosenbusch.

The folding-doors that led into the central hall flew open, and disclosed on the threshold, illuminated by lamps at the sides, and standing on a framework draped in red, a puppet-theatre that occupied almost the entire width of the space. The table was quickly pushed to one side, and the chairs for the spectators were arranged in rows. After everybody had taken his place, a short prelude was played upon a flute behind the scenes ; and then the curtain in front of the little stage rose, and a puppet in a dress-coat and black knee-breeches, carrying his hat in his hand—with the air of a director who has an official communication to make, or of a dramatic poet who has held himself in readiness behind the wings, to respond in case he should possibly be called before the footlights—delivered a rhymed prologue. In this he greeted the associates, and, after lamenting in half-satirical, half-serious stanzas, the decline of art and of the love of the beautiful, introduced his troop of players, of whom he especially boasted that no modern strifes or heartburnings ever invaded their temple, or kept them from a pure and lofty devotion to the Muses. His speech concluded, the little man made a dignified obeisance, and the curtain fell, to be again drawn up after a few moments, upon the little drama that had been prepared for the amusement of the company.

It bore the title of "The Wicked Brothers," and was in reality but the introduction to a longer play, designed

to be produced upon some future evening. In rhyming verses it set forth the history of a musician, an artist, and a poet—three brothers who had been left at the foundling-asylum of a little village, and had grown up to become the curse of the region with their pranks; a very demon of evil-doing appearing to possess them, and their parentage remaining an impenetrable mystery to the quiet village folk. To them, after some of the worst of their misdeeds, and just as the villagers were about to wreak their vengeance on them, appeared no less a personage than the devil himself, revealing to them that he was their father, and that he had called them into being that they might work the ruin of the human race. This said, he summoned them away with him to undertake their mission in a larger field than this of their apprenticeship. And here the action left them; the fantastic little piece closing at last with a short epilogue by the same puppet who had introduced the play, his final verses promising the Paradise associates that on some other night they should enjoy a view of the results of this deep plot against their kind, but hinting, nevertheless, that they should see how, in the end, the true and beautiful should triumph, and the fell scheming of the brothers and their father should be brought to naught.

CHAPTER IV.

THE play came to an end amid great applause. The quaintness of the composition, the easy flow of the words, and that mixture of gaiety and melancholy which is always effective, excited such enthusiasm among the spec-

tators that the clapping would have no end, and the little puppet who recited the epilogue was obliged to come forward again and again to return thanks in the name of the poet.

Felix, especially, found much to admire in the little comedy, that had apparently lost the charm of novelty for the others ; especially the extraordinary life-likeness of the little figures, scarcely two spans high, which were carved, painted, and dressed in the most careful manner, each in accordance with his character ; the astonishing dexterity with which they moved upon the stage, and, finally, and above all else, the masterly art of the delivery.

The voices changed so rapidly and distinctly, the key-note to each *rôle* was so happily struck, and in the long speeches of the devil the speaker developed so brilliant a power that there was probably not one person among the audience who could repress a feeling of creeping horror, such as one has when ghost stories are told in the dark.

When the rows had broken up again, and everybody was standing about talking and laughing noisily, Felix took occasion to express to Schnetz his amazement that a person of such great rhetorical talent should have turned his back forever upon his art, and have settled down at a clerk's desk.

"He will have all or nothing !" remarked the lieutenant. "Since he lost one of his eyes, and deluded himself into the belief that with a glass eye he would not be fit for the stage, he is far too proud to step down from the high horse of the tragedian to the donkey of the public reader. Every one knows whether he is acting to his own disadvantage when he plays the malcontent. It is

true, though, some one really ought to prevail upon him to become the manager of a puppet-theatre. And then, besides, it would offer a good employment for Rosenbusch, who makes his puppets for him, and lends him a helping hand at the exhibition. Although, to be sure, anything of that sort only affords pleasure to a person of his stamp so long as it is an art which earns him no bread. He has been puttering away over this farce for three weeks at least, and letting everything else slide in consequence of it. If it were exhibited for an entrance fee, he would soon be tired of it."

Elfinger now entered again, and was obliged to submit to the applause showered upon him in his proper person, and to acknowledge the toasts drunk in his honor. He modestly refused, however, to accept the applause, since the thanks of the audience belonged more properly to the author, who was not himself, but a poet known to them all, who cherished a wish to be admitted to Paradise. It was merely with this end in view that he had written the text for the puppets, in the hope of introducing himself in this way to the society, and of winning their good opinion.

His admission was immediately agreed upon by acclamation, without the usual formalities. Kohle begged the loan of the manuscript, as he wished to illustrate it in a series of sketches. Rossel began, after his usual fashion, to make criticisms upon different parts, censuring especially the imitation of Immermann's "Merlin." Elfinger defended the poem, and the dispute had begun to run in danger of becoming heated, when the door was thrown open and Rosenbusch rushed in in a state of great excitement.

"Treachery!" he cried; "black, villainous treachery!"

Hell sends forth its spies to ferret out the secrets of Paradise! The veil of night is no longer sacred; profane curiosity is plucking at the curtain of our mysteries—and, by-the-way, give me something to drink!”

All pressed around the breathless speaker, who had thrown himself into a chair, refusing, however, in spite of the confusion of questions and suggestions that went on about him, to give any explanation whatever until he had moistened his thirsty throat. Not until he had done this to the most liberal extent did he begin to relate his adventure.

After his assistance behind the scenes was no longer needed, he had swung himself out of one of the windows of the central hall into the cool garden, in order to refresh himself a little in the night air. So he strolled comfortably up and down under the trees, studying the clouds and occasionally playing a few snatches on his flute, until he at last experienced a most remarkable thirst. As he was slowly walking around the house, with the intention of rejoining the company by way of the back-door, he suddenly beheld two suspicious-looking figures, women, in long dark cloaks and with hoods or veils over their heads, who stood at one of the windows intently peering in through a crack in the shutters. He tried to surprise them, and catch them *in flagrante delicto*. But, stealthily as he crept upon them, the crunching of the gravel had betrayed him. They both immediately rushed away from the window and fled in the direction of the gate, he after them like lightning, all the more eagerly because he saw a carriage waiting outside in the street. And sure enough, he succeeded in catching one of them by the sleeve, just as she reached the lattice-gate—the stouter one, who carried something under her cloak which

hindered her in running. The prisoner besought him, in a frightened but evidently disguised voice, to let her go—she had done no harm, a mere chance, and other excuses of a like sort. He, on his part, excited by anger and indignation, and not a little by curiosity, would not let go, but insisted upon learning their names; the cloak, that he held firmly, had already begun to rip in a suspicious way, as if it were on the point of tearing and remaining alone in his hands, like the affair of Joseph reversed, when the other woman, who had in the mean while reached the carriage, turned round again and said, in a deep voice :

“Don’t be afraid, my dear, the gentleman is much too chivalrous to make an attack on two unprotected ladies. *Venez, ma chère!*”

“These words,” he continued, springing up, “made—I confess it to my shame—so strong an impression upon me that I, ass that I was, let go of the cloak and the woman for the purpose of taking off my hat and making a very polite bow to the second of the wretches. They were both, however, too much frightened to laugh at my devilish absurdity, and spoke not another word, but slipped away from me into the carriage, and drove off the devil knows where.”

“And I stood there and could have knocked my brains out; for it occurred to me in a second what a wonderful figure I must have cut in the affair. But the best is still to come. What did the woman have under her cloak? In struggling with her I had several times struck against it, and noticed that it must be something four-cornered, something like a picture-frame. And suddenly, as I was very sulkily sneaking back again toward the house, it occurred to me, ‘what if it were the Bride of Corinth!

Now, supposing I go and see what really became of it.' I knew perfectly well out of which window Stephanopulos had sent it flying. So I searched and searched—but, grope about as I would, no trace of it could be discovered, and inasmuch as the ground all around the place is still full of little puddles, and the flame must undoubtedly have been immediately extinguished, you may bet ten to one that these spying night-rovers saw it burning—perhaps indeed were first led by it to slink into the garden ; and that now they have borne away their booty to a place of safety."

A great tumult followed upon this communication. Some of the youngest, excited by wine, wanted to rush out on the track of the flying women, in order that they might recover the stolen property. The wildest proposals were heard as to how they should take revenge for this outrage, and how they should prevent such a desecration of their mystic rites in the future. All these noisy ones were silenced when Jansen suddenly took up the matter, and admonished them to listen to reason. What was done here had no cause to shun the light. The only one who was personally affected by the matter was Stephanopulos. Since he did not appear to be much troubled, the others might rest content.

So said, so done ; and the festive feeling once more burst forth in all its glory. The wine loosened even the heaviest tongues ; every one sought out the neighbor he liked best ; and even the young Greek thawed out so thoroughly from his ill-humor that he condescended to sing some of the popular airs of his native land, which earned him great applause. In the mean while Philip Emanuel Kohle went up and down the hall, like one of the gracious genii, with head high in air and beaming look, bearing

his goblet in his hand, and drinking toasts with everybody—to the ideal—to resignation and the gods of Greece—and declaiming, in the intervals, verses of Hölderlin.

Schnetz also seemed to be in admirable spirits. He had seated himself astride of the little cask in the corner, had a few sprigs of wild-grape vine above his close-cropped head, and was delivering an oration that no one heard.

When it struck three o'clock, Elfinger was dancing a fandango with the architect who had recently returned from Spain, Rosenbusch playing an accompaniment on the flute ; and Fat Rossel had placed three empty glasses before him, on which he beat time with a lead pencil. Felix, who had also learned the dance in Mexico, relieved Elfinger after a time, and gradually the excitement seized upon the others. Jansen alone remained quiet, but his eyes sparkled joyously. He had erected a sort of throne for old Schöpf upon the table, and had placed a number of green plants around it. And there the white-haired old man sat, above all the noise, until the wine warmed him too, and he rose, and with charming dignity gave vent to all sorts of odd sayings and wise saws.

At four o'clock the wine in the cask ran dry. Schnetz announced this sorrowful discovery to the dancers, singers, and speakers, with a funereal mien and pathetic earnestness, and summoned them to pay the last honors to the deceased. A solemn procession was formed ; each person bore a candle, a blazing piece of kindling wood or anything that would pass for a torch ; and, standing in a semi-circle about the cask, they sang a requiem, at the close of which all the lights were suddenly extinguished.

And now the pale light of dawn penetrated through the windows, and Jansen announced that the time had

come for the dissolving of the meeting, which took place according to unvarying usage—all leaving at the same time. The abundant wine had robbed none of them of their senses, though a few were not perfectly firm on their legs. As they passed out, a fresh morning breeze was just springing up on the still meadows of the English Garden. The trees shivered in the falling dew. Arm-in-arm the friends sauntered along in the gray morning air, that cooled their feverish foreheads, humming to themselves snatches of song and fragments of the fandango; and last of all came Jansen and Felix, arm-in-arm, now and then pressing closer to one another, both lost in thought that found no words.

CHAPTER V.

ANGELICA threw down her brush. "It is strange," she said, "that everything I do to-day is so absurd. At all events the proverb is false to the core; the beginning is always easy, and only the completion has its wretched trials. And then, besides, when no one else is working in the whole house, one appears to one's self to be perfectly crazy with diligence. Naturally, the saint-factory downstairs stands still on Sunday. But then the others too! In Rosenbusch's room the mice are squealing from pure hunger or *ennui*; and I have not heard Jansen's door squeak once this morning. It is natural that they should be lazy or have a headache after their night's revel; and they will certainly miss the Sunday mass in the Pina-kothek. Yesterday they were in Paradise."

"Paradise?"

"That is the name they give to their secret society

that meets every four weeks. There must be wild goings on there ; at least Rosenbusch, who, as a general thing, cannot easily keep a secret from me, assumes a face like the holy Vehm if I ever begin to speak about it. Oh, these men, Julie, these men ! This Maximilian Rosenbusch—I must say that I really think he is by nature good ; indeed, between ourselves, my dearest, he would be more interesting to me if he looked a little *less* moral, did not play on the flute, and were really the terrible scapegrace that he sometimes makes himself out. But there, one infects the other, and the very name of ‘Paradise !’ One can easily conceive that a pretty antediluvian tone must prevail there, somewhat highly spiced and free and easy.”

“Do they keep to themselves, or are ‘ladies’ also present ?”

“I don’t know. As a rule, they appear to amuse themselves in quite a moral manner ; but now and then, especially at carnival time, when, for that matter, every one here in Munich carries the freedom of the mask pretty far—”

“Does Jansen also belong to the society ?”

“Of course, he cannot help doing so. But he is said to be one of the quietest among them, according to Rosenbusch. Upon my life, I would just like to peep through the keyhole once ! ‘Oh, had I a jacket and trousers and hat !’”

“Why, Angelica, you have the true woman’s-rights ideas !”

The painter drew a deep sigh.

“Julie,” she said, with comical solemnity, “that is just the misfortune of my life, that two souls dwell in this breast—a timid, old-maidish, conservative girl’s soul by the side of a very bold, dare-devil, Bohemian artist’s

temperament. Tell me, did you never in your life experience a strong desire to cut loose for once from propriety—to do something thoroughly reckless, improper, unpermissible? Of course I mean when one was entirely among boon companions, and no one could reprove the other, because all were possessed of the same demon. The men fare well in this respect. When they steal back again into the lost Paradise, they call it a sign of genius. An unfortunate woman, though she were ten times an artist, and as such perpetually inclined not to be a Philistine, must never let it be seen in her manner of life that she can do more than darn stockings!—It is true,” she continued, thoughtfully, “as for women in a body, a whole swarm of talented women—no matter how much capacity some among them might have for such a thing—I myself would decline such a Paradise with thanks. Now, why is that? Does it really amount to this, that we cannot exist by ourselves alone; that we can neither plan nor bring about anything successful?”

“Perhaps it merely arises from the fact that true friendship, real thorough companionship, is so rare among our sex,” answered Julie, musingly. “We are just as loath to permit another to shine among ourselves as before the men. But something has just occurred to me; might not we take advantage of the occasion, and, as you recently proposed, take a look at Jansen’s studio?”

“And why not rather when he is there himself? He would undoubtedly be very happy—”

“No, no!” interposed Julie, hastily, “I will not do that. I have invariably played such a silly part in studios—because it is impossible for me to bring myself to pay a trivial compliment—that I have sworn never again to visit an artist surrounded by his works. You know it

is my Cordelia-like character—whenever my heart is full my mouth refuses to overflow.”

“Foolish woman!” laughed the artist, hastily wiping her brush and preparing herself to go out. “You of the public always imagine that we want to hear eulogies. When you lose the power of speech from admiration, and make the most foolish and enraptured faces, I like you a thousand times better.”

Angelica called the janitor, who was busily engaged in the yard brushing away the moths from an old piece of Gobelin tapestry that Rosenbusch had recently bought. While he went off to fetch the key to the studio, she whispered to her friend :

“We will not go first into the saint-factory, but pass at once into the holy of holies! It is always painful to see how even such an artist—one of the few great ones—must use his art to gain bread. It is true, no human being can imagine why he really has to do it. He needs almost nothing for himself. And, since he stands quite alone in the world—to be sure, though, that needs yet to be proved—his saints must bring him in a great deal of money. What he does with it, whether he buries it as the wages of sin, walls it up, or speculates with it on the Bourse— But here comes our old factotum with the key. Thank you, Fridolin. Here is something for your trouble. Drink a measure to the health of this beautiful lady. What, she pleases you too? To be sure you have had an opportunity to cultivate your taste, living as you do among artists.”

The flattered old man grinned, attempted to stammer a compliment, and opened the studio door. Angelica immediately ran up to the “Dancing Girl” and began to free her from the damp cloths wrapped about her.

“Now, place yourself here !” she cried, when the figure was entirely exposed. “To be sure she is divine seen from any side, but viewed in half-profile—taking in just a little of the back and the outline standing out so clearly against the bright sky—is it not ravishing? Does not one feel as if it were just going to spring from its pedestal and rush through the room, dragging one with it in its mad whirl? I can never look at this work without my old love for dancing coming back to me in my old age, and vibrating through every limb! It is a pity that I am such an ungraceful person, otherwise you would have to tuck up your dress and dance a reel with me.”

And she did indeed make a few very lively movements, which were grotesque enough.

“I entreat you, Angelica, be sensible! You are, to be sure, thoroughly at home here. But it takes away my breath! Everything is so strange to me—”

“Isn’t it so—one doesn’t see anything of this sort every day? How every part lives and breathes! One might actually believe that the blooming young flesh must yield when one touches it; and, with all that, so pure and magnificent and full of style, that one never thinks of the model when looking at it.”

“Is it modeled after life?”

“Do you think that this kind of thing is imagined out of thin air?”

“And girls can actually be found who allow themselves to be made use of for—”

“More than enough, you darling innocent. To be sure—of a sort that one of us would not touch with gloves. But Rosenbusch says that, for all that, they are better than their reputation. He has found very respectable creatures among them—one, indeed, who had a regu-

lar husband and a number of children, and who went to the studios as soberly as others go to the seamstress or the milliner. Yes, yes, my dearest, we good children of good families have no conception of all this. Look," she continued, turning to Felix's modeling-board, "there is where the young baron works. He has copied the foot of the anatomical model, and now, as a reward, he is permitted to recruit himself over the foot of an Æginite. Not bad!—by no means without talent! An uncommonly handsome and agreeable man, too, whom I like very much. But—remember what I tell you—he will always remain a cavalier, and will never in all his life become a true artist!"

She accented the word "cavalier," in the contemptuous manner in which a sailor talks about a landsman. Then she stepped up to the large central group of the Adam and Eve, and began cautiously to undo the covering.

"How is this?" said she. "Why he has actually fastened the group with clothes-pins since I last saw it, a fortnight ago. Well, I think I may be allowed to unfasten it somewhat, and, after all, he will never notice it. What eyes you will make at it, Giulietta! *È una magia*, as the Italians say. It is much grander, more imposing and unprecedented than the 'Dancing Girl' over there. There! Now, just let me unwind this towel very carefully indeed—the head of the Eve has only just been modeled—"

The damp linen cloth, that enveloped the figure of the kneeling woman, now slipped off; at the same instant Angelica, who stood behind the group and was carefully removing the last folds from the clay figure, heard a half-suppressed cry from the lips of her friend.

"Now, don't you see that I was right?" she cried. "It *is* beautiful enough to shriek over. No respectable person can see such a thing without uttering a few inarticulate sounds. But, for Heaven's sake!" she cried, interrupting herself and rushing to Julie, whom she saw turn suddenly pale and step backward, "what is the matter with you, my own love? You are so very—speak—what has so—gracious Heaven! That! I never would have believed it myself! Such a surprise—such an unheard-of piece of treachery and meanness! And, with all that, so extraordinarily well carried out! Oh, this Jansen! So that accounts for the pins—that accounts for his not wishing to show the group to any one for the last fortnight!"

Julie had retreated to the window and stood there, undecided what to do, her head sunk upon her heaving breast. But the painter, in whom enthusiasm had banished all alarm about her agitated friend, stood with folded hands, as if absorbed in worship, before the work that was so well known to her, and upon which, nevertheless, she gazed in utter surprise. For since she saw it last the head of Eve, that was then in the first rough stage of development, had assumed a firm, carefully-executed form, and the face, sweetly bowed forward, with which she gazed at the man just awakening from sleep, resembled, feature for feature, the beautiful girl who now, sinking down into her chair in an indescribable state of confusion, shame, and anger, looked up at her own image.

And then it would have been most edifying for a third person to have overheard how the painter, as soon as she had overcome the first shock, now strove to enter into the spirit of her friend and storm over the robbery of her

beauty ; now strove to make it clear to her that there was nothing wrong or improper in the whole matter. Then, when she had run on for a while in the most enraptured terms about this magnificent work, the majesty and the charm of these forms, she suddenly became woman enough again to find the undeniable resemblance of the features of this beautiful Eve, in her paradisaical innocence, a very serious thing after all. To be sure, she strove to defend the artist ; no one could help his inspirations, and the more than life-size scale removed the work from all realistic consideration. But her burning cheeks told her better than anything else that she was not made to be a good devil's-advocate ; and when she had played her trump card, always keeping her back turned to the silent girl, and had declared that no one ought to think herself too good to be so immortalized—that this was entirely different from the case of the sister of Napoleon, whom Canova had portrayed in marble, or that of the so-called "Venus" of Titian, whose lover was playing the lute by her side—she suddenly turned to Julie, threw her arms round her neck and besought her with humble appeals and caresses not to be angry with her, that she was as innocent of this evil deed as Rosebud's white mice ; and that if she had a suspicion that this wicked Jansen would have dared to do such a thing, she would certainly never have invited him to her studio at the last sitting. And, as a proof of this, she would at once hunt him up and firmly insist—though what a pity it would be for the wonderful work's sake—that every trace of resemblance, even the most remote, in this airily-clad Eve to her deeply offended descendant should be removed.

"Do so—I shall rely upon it !" said Julie, suddenly, with great earnestness, as she rose in all her dignity and

womanly majesty. "That I must never be thrown in contact with him again, that I can never enter this house again, you will easily understand!" And as she said this, turning toward the door, she cast a last angry look at her counterfeit.

She understood it perfectly, replied the painter, meekly. She would not have it otherwise; Jansen had acted altogether too inconsiderately, and toward her, too, who as an old fellow-inmate of the same house was, to a certain extent, responsible for the good behavior of the rest. But of one thing Julie might be sure: Jansen had not been guilty of any bad intention, or of one of those pieces of presumption that artists often indulge in, but merely of thoughtlessness and indiscretion, and he would undoubtedly take it very much to heart; and if she should really remain firm in the intention of never seeing him again, a punishment which, it is true, he had richly deserved—

While these speeches were being poured out, to all of which Julie listened with an expression of face that it was not easy to understand, the two friends—for Julie helped, too, with trembling hands—had carefully wrapped up the group again, and had added to the pins from their own stock. When they went out into the yard after having done this, they earnestly cautioned the janitor not to open the studio again for any one, until Herr Jansen himself had gone in again. Then they left the house, not, as on the day before, walking familiarly arm-in-arm, but silent and dejected, and taking leave of one another at the very first street-corner.

Angelica determined to make an attempt to see if she could not meet the offender in the Pinakothek, in spite of the festival of the preceding day. Julie, who had

lowered her veil as if, after this experience, she no longer dared to look any one in the face, hastened by the shortest way toward home, where she could, in complete solitude, collect herself and compose her excited mind.

CHAPTER VI.

BUT scarcely was she alone when the excitement within her, although not at once stilled, lost, singularly enough, all that it had had of pain and bitterness, and such an unmistakable feeling of pleasure and happiness filled her soul that she herself, as she was forced to admit, felt frightened at it.

Do what she would, she could no longer feel as angry at the secret insult that had been offered to her maiden dignity as she ought properly to have felt. It seemed indeed as if, the moment the witness of the misdeed was removed from her sight, all the bad aspect had disappeared from the matter, which, after all, had only become wrong and unpardonable when strange eyes had spied into the well-guarded secret of a pure artist-soul. Now, when she thought about the work, how it stood there in the deserted studio, carefully wrapped, with only the sparrows flying about it, and guarded from every betraying ray of light, what was there so sinful in the fact that the head of this beautiful kneeling woman bore her own features?

This figure constantly floated before her, no matter how hard she might try to turn her attention upon other things. And although in the work of the artist nothing was finished but the head, her fancy saw the finished

statue, and, for the first time in her life, she looked upon her own beauty, in her thoughts, with other eyes than her own, which could find nothing new or especial in it. The cruel lot that had held her apart from life in her girlish years, and the early experiences that had given her a contemptuous, if not a hostile opinion of men, had kept her mind isolated from all those feelings that usually agitate a girl's soul in its spring-time. It had never occurred to her to look at herself, as it were, through the eyes of a man, for she had never known one for whose sake she would have thought it worth while to give herself so much trouble. When she observed her face in the mirror, and could not help finding it beautiful, it afforded her just as little pleasure as if—like a female Robinson Crusoe on some island in the ocean—she had seen her reflection in clear water, and had known by it that she was queen of the wilderness. In the next room sat the poor mad-woman, in her arm-chair, and nodded at the beautiful daughter, whom she was robbing of life, with an idiotic smile. Of what avail was her beauty against this inexorable fate?

Sometimes indeed, in the spring nights, between dreaming and waking, or when she read some beautiful moving story, it seemed to her as if the frost that had settled about her heart were bursting, as if a secret longing for something sweet and precious swelled her bosom, a trembling desire for some unknown, unattainable happiness. But this feeling never took the shape of a being who should strive to gain her love, and whom she might love in return. At such times she dreamed of nothing better than to have the liberty of belonging to herself, of being freed from that horrible duty which, to be sure, had grown less hard through custom, and which no longer awakened even a

shudder, but which held her a prisoner daily and hourly. If these chains only fell from her—would she then be so unwise as to voluntarily submit herself to a new form of restraint?

But by this time she had enjoyed her freedom long enough to have been sometimes forced to admit, with a quiet sigh, that the longed-for happiness was not so overpowering that it relieved the soul of all other desires. What she really did want she did not know. She fancied that, if she only had a talent of some sort, it would fill this yearning emptiness within her. Since she believed it to be too late for her to take up music or drawing, she hit upon the idea of writing down her thoughts and moods in free rhythmic forms of her own invention. These were by no means the usual imitations of well-known lyric poets, in the conventional and occasionally much-abused metres and stanzas. What she wrote in her secret diary bore about the same relation to this conventional poetry that the play of the wind upon an *Æolian* harp does to a sonnet. But for all that it was an unspeakable comfort to her, when she felt that she was striking melodious chords within her lonely soul, to listen to the rise and fall of this melody of thoughts, and to transcribe it as well as she was able. The secrecy with which she pursued this art lent it an additional charm; and many a lonely evening hour was thus whiled away, as quickly and happily as if it had been spent in the company of an intimate friend, to whom she could have poured out her innermost heart.

But now, when she had reached her home, and had hurriedly closed the blinds that she might brood in absolute silence and solitude over what had happened, she felt a sudden shock pass through her heart as she reflected that during the past week her thoughts had more than

once been busy with the audacious man who had dared this theft of her beauty—ay, that he had even entered more than once into her secret poems. She had not given much more thought to this than to the other subjects she had touched on in her diary : merely that she had made one more acquaintance, and that of a man who could scarcely be said to have an everyday face, and to whom all the others in his circle conceded the first rank without a moment's jealousy. But was it not a singular coincidence that, at the very time when she was attempting to describe the impression that he had made upon her, he should be engaged in moulding the image of her own features ?

She rose thoughtfully to go to her writing-desk. She was obliged to pass by the glass, and she stood before it for a while earnestly contemplating her reflection, with the same sort of curiosity she would have shown had she never seen herself before, but had just had her attention drawn to herself by some third person. But, at the moment, she was not at all pleased with her appearance. The face of the Eve seemed to her fancy a thousand times more beautiful ; he himself would be forced to admit this if he should see her and compare her, face to face, with his work. “Ten years ago,” she said to herself, with a shake of the head, “I may, perhaps, have looked like that. Oh, for the beautiful lost years !”

For all this she began to arrange her hair in the same way that he had arranged it in the statue, and she found this style of coiffure, in a plain knot, charmingly becoming to her. She blushed at this, and turned away. And now her heart beat still louder, as she drew forth from the desk the book containing her confessions, and read over the last pages. “I really believe I was in a fair way of

falling in love with him," she said aloud, when she had reached the end. "And he—he looked upon me as he would upon any good model that chanced to fall in his way ; studied my face, so that he might steal it from me, and ruthlessly insulted every womanly feeling I have. If I had been anything more to him, if he had even taken a deep interest in me, he would never have had the heart to make such a display of me, he would never have subjected me to such ideas !—Oh, it is shameful ! I will never, never forgive him that !"

A passionate feeling of pain, like the anger and indignation that had overwhelmed her in the first moment of the discovery, once more flamed within her. She threw the book into the drawer and hastily locked it up. Then she paced up and down through her entire suite of rooms, and struggled to calm her mood again.

But it was not so easy as she had expected. For the first time she failed to understand the voices that were speaking in her heart, nor could she silence them. A feeling had come over this mature, firm nature, such as seldom takes possession of any but the young in the time of their earliest development ; that oppressing sense of delight that is almost akin to pain, that threatens to burst the heart, and that makes the thought of dying and passing quietly away so grateful as if death were nothing but a gentle sinking into some unfelt deep that is brimming over with flowers.

Her anger had suddenly passed away. She tried hard, as soon as she was conscious of this, to picture to herself her insulter in the most repulsive shape. Not succeeding in that, she made an attempt to be angry with herself, to reproach herself for her womanish weakness, in being frivolous enough to feel flattered by this robbery. But

she succeeded little better than before ; one thing only stood before her mind, that he and she were in the world together, and that they had both thought of one another at the same moment.

The door opened softly ; the old servant stepped in and announced that Mr. Jansen wished to pay his respects.

CHAPTER VII.

OF course he had come to apologize. Angelica must have urged the necessity of his doing so very strongly indeed : must have depicted to him in pretty glowing colors the anger of her deeply insulted friend, to judge from the fact of his knocking at her door but two hours after. Her first thought was to refuse to see him. But then, what if he should be disposed to treat the matter altogether too lightly ; what if he thought to appease her by some jesting or even gallant apology ? Well, she would soon let him know with whom he had to deal, and that he could not escape so easily. Had she not been called “the girl without a heart,” and was she not at this moment without friend or protector, forced to rely entirely upon her native dignity, which had just been so audaciously insulted ?

“If the gentleman would have the goodness—I should be very glad to see him—very glad !”

She stood in the middle of the room as he entered. Her beautiful face had struggled hard to assume its coldest and haughtiest expression. But with the first look that she cast upon the visitor, the armor of ice that she had fastened about her bosom melted away.

For, in fact, a very different man from the one she had

expected stood before her. Where was the confident smile that sought to make the matter appear in the light of a jest, or even of an act of homage? Where the confidence with which the famous master reckons upon absolution for the sin of having made an unknown beauty immortal?

It was true, he did not appear quite like a penitent malefactor. Erect, and with a scarcely perceptible inclination of the head, he saluted her, and his eyes did not avoid hers; on the contrary, they even dwelt upon her features with so gloomy a fire that she involuntarily lowered her eyelids, and asked herself in secret whether she was not the guilty one after all, since this man appeared before her so sad and melancholy.

"Gnädiges Fräulein," he said, "I have given you reason to be very angry with me. I merely come to inform you that the cause of your displeasure is already removed. If you were willing to visit my *atelier* again—which, unfortunately, I must doubt—you would see in the place where your own features confronted you this morning nothing but a shapeless mass."

"You have—you really ought to have—"

"I have done at once what I owed to you, in order that you might not form a wrong opinion of me. Sooner or later I should have had to do it in any case—even though no one had urged me to it. I wish sincerely that you would believe me when I say this—though I scarcely dare to hope so, since you do not know me—and are perhaps still too angry with me not to—not to believe me capable of any piece of discourtesy."

"I?—I confess—I have until now thought neither well nor ill of—"

She did not complete the sentence—she felt that she

blushed, as she tried to assure him of her complete indifference—three steps from the drawer where her confessions were lying.

“I know it,” continued he; and his dark glance wandered over the dimly-lighted room. “I am so perfectly indifferent to you, that it must, after all, be very easy for you to pardon something that cannot have awakened any very strong personal feeling in your mind. One who is entirely unknown to us cannot insult us. When he has taken back again that with which he has wounded us, it is as if nothing had happened. And so I might perhaps take my leave of you, gnädiges Fräulein, with the renewed assurance of my sincere regret that I have unconsciously offended you.”

She made a scarcely perceptible motion toward the sofa, as if she would invite him to be seated. He was much too occupied with his own thoughts to pay any attention to it.

“Perhaps it is folly,” continued he, after a pause—“perhaps more than that—wrong, if I intrude any longer, and give you an explanation for which you have no desire, and which will perhaps strike you disagreeably, since it turns upon something that cannot but be a matter of perfect indifference to you : not much more interesting than if you should hear there had been a thunderstorm at a place forty miles away, and that the lightning had struck a tree. Still—now that I have acknowledged my wrong and have done all in my power to make it good again—I owe it to myself not to permit you to take a worse view of me than I have really deserved. When, before a court of justice, one can put forth the plea of mental irresponsibility, it is considered the most important of all mitigating circumstances. Now this is just the case in which I find myself

placed in regard to you. I can plead, as an excuse for the insane thought of giving your features to my Eve, the fact that since I first saw you I have actually been insane ; that waking or dreaming no other face floated before me except yours ; that I have gone about as if in a fever, and that I knew no better way of dealing with my hopeless passion than by striving, shut up alone in my workshop, to reproduce your face—and wretchedly enough did I succeed ! ”

He made a movement as though he were about to leave her ; but once again he remained where he was, and appeared to be struggling painfully for words.

“ You are silent, Fräulein,” he continued. “ I know you think it very strange that I should endeavor to atone for a great and almost unpardonable act of audacity, by committing a still greater one. Perhaps you will not believe me, or will consider me a raving madman for betraying to you, after so short an acquaintance, a passion that has carried me beyond all bounds of propriety and decorum. But you would judge differently, if you knew in what dreariness and isolation of heart I have passed the five years since I came to Munich ; that not an hour’s happiness has been vouchsafed to me ; that no womanly being capable of awakening a single deeper thought has come near me. It is true I have not thought it worth my while to seek for such companionship. I have deluded myself with the idea that I missed nothing, that my heart and feelings did not hunger and thirst—until you suddenly crossed my path—and then this sudden vision of beauty and grace, coming as it did after long loneliness, brought about an intoxication that has completely robbed me of my senses.

“ I doubt whether this explanation will be clear to you.

I know nothing more of you than your enthusiastic friend, our good Angelica, has told us. Perhaps you may never have had any experience yourself that would lead you to believe that a passion which bursts so suddenly upon reasonable men could be found anywhere but in a fairy tale. Enough, I thought I owed it to myself to tell you of this fact, merely as a singular instance that need trouble you no farther. And now, permit me to take my leave. I—I should really have nothing more to tell you, and as for you—I find it no more than right that you should prefer to reply only by silence to such singular and extraordinary disclosures.”

“No,” she cried suddenly, as he already had his hand upon the door-knob; “it is not so right as you think, for one to tell all that he has upon his heart, while the other only accepts it all, and gives no confidence in return. To be sure, I know very well—I must attribute much of what you have confided to me to the easily-excited fantasy of an artist. Nevertheless, I am not so vain as not to imagine that in the course of five years you have never encountered a face fairer and more blooming than this of mine, that I have now borne about with me for full thirty-one. And for that reason I am almost forced to believe that there really is a secret bond of fate that quickly draws two human beings together in an altogether inexplicable way. For see—” she continued, covered with a confusion that only made her more beautiful, as she opened the drawer of her writing-desk and drew forth her diary—“I, too, although I perhaps knew less of you than you of me—I, too, have often had you with me in my thoughts—and since you have destroyed again the image that you took from me without my knowledge, ought not I also to destroy those pages in which you are spoken of—”

She made a gesture as if she were about to tear out the pages. In an instant he had sprung to her side and had seized firm hold of her hand.

"Julie!" he cried, as if beside himself; "is it true—is it possible? Your thoughts were with me?—and in these pages—I beseech you, let me have but one look—only let me see one line, so that I shall not think that you have invented all this in order to give me comfort, and to relieve me from my shame—"

"Shame!" she whispered. "But cannot you see that in spite of my thirty-one years I am trembling like a child detected in some naughtiness? Must I really read aloud to you out of this book what you—what you might long ago have guessed from my silence—if you had not been trembling so yourself?"

The last words died away on her lips. The book slipped from her hands and fell on the carpet, where it lay without his bending to pick it up.

A kind of stupor had come over him. He seized both her hands and clasped them so tightly that it pained her; but the pain did her good. His face was so near hers that she could see every muscle in it quiver; his eyes gleamed with a wild fire, like the gaze of a somnambulist. And yet she had no horror of him. She would gladly have stood so forever, and have felt her hands in his, and have encountered the power of his fixed gaze.

It was only when she felt that her eyes were on the point of overflowing, and feared that he might misunderstand it, that she said softly, smilingly shaking her head: "Don't you believe me even yet?"

Then at last he released her hands, threw his arms about her yielding figure, and pressed her wildly to his breast.

A noise was heard in the front room ; the old servant apparently wished to remind the visitor, by the rattling of plates and knives and forks, that dinner-time was something that must be respected.

As if startled out of a dream, Jansen suddenly tore himself from Julie's arms. "Unhappy wretch that I am !" cried he, hoarsely, covering his face with his hands. "Oh, God ! Where have I let myself be carried ?"

"You have only followed where our hearts had already led !" said Julie, with a happy smile, while her moist eyes sought his. "What is the matter with you, best and dearest friend ?" she continued, anxiously, for he was about to seize his hat. "You are going—and now ? What drives you away from me ? Who—who can part us ? What have I done that you again turn away from me ? My best and dearest friend, I entreat you—"

He struggled hard to answer ; a dark red flush overspread his pale face. "Do not ask me now," he stammered ; "this blessed hour—this inconceivable happiness—no—it must—it cannot be !—Forgive—forget—"

At this moment the old servant opened the door ; he cast a look at the visitor that could hardly be interpreted as an invitation to stay longer. Jansen stepped hastily up to the agitated and speechless girl. "You shall hear from me soon, everything. Forgive—and may you be forever blessed for this hour !"

He seized her hand and pressed it passionately to his lips. Then he rushed from the room, followed by the old servant shaking his head, while Julie gazed after him, lost in a maze of conflicting emotions.

It is true that the moment she was alone again the happiness of knowing that her love was returned over

powered all feelings of doubt that had been awakened within her. His mysterious behavior, his sudden flight, his strange awakening from the sweetest realization of a hopeless dream, ought that to make her distrust him, when it merely confirmed what he had said of himself ; that this intoxication had driven him out of his senses ? And was it not best upon the whole that this miracle which had happened to them both should not be reduced all at once to an affair of everyday life, but that they should part, bearing away with them in their hearts their new-found treasure in all its fullness ? To-morrow—to-morrow he will come again, and all will be new and wonderful once more, as it was to-day ; and is that day lost which one can spend in thoughts of one's great happiness, or that night in which one can dream of it ?

She threw back her head, as if in doing so she would shake from her the last remaining doubts. Then she stepped to the mirror, and began to rearrange her hair that her violent friend had completely disordered. What would her old servant have thought had he found her in this state ? As she thought of this she smiled mysteriously at her own image, as if it were a *confidante* who alone knew of some great happiness that had just fallen to her lot. Little as she ordinarily cared to look at her own reflection, to-day she could not tear herself away from the glass ; "So, to please him, one must look as I do," she said to herself.

"I wonder whether he saw this wrinkle here, and that deep line, and all those traces that these hateful, anxious years have left upon my face ? But it cannot be helped now ; I have not cheated him, at all events, and besides, he has eyes of his own—and such eyes !"

Then she sighed again and pressed her hand to her

heart. "Who would have dreamed it?" she said, once more walking up and down: "only yesterday and I was so calm here—wearied and tired of life—and to-day!—And not a soul besides us two knows anything of it! Angelica, it is true—I wonder whether she suspects nothing?—the good soul! Perhaps I ought to go and confess to her.—But would not that look as if I wanted to boast to her of my happiness? And then I will wager that she herself is secretly in love with him—who could live under the same roof with him and resist it?—'Julie Jansen'—It sounds as though it could never have been otherwise since the world began."

Suddenly the room felt so close and oppressive to her that she sent the old servant to call her a droschke, that she might go out into the air for a while. He was allowed to take a seat on the box, and in this way they drove at a slow trot around the English Garden. The beautiful weather, and the fact that it was Sunday, had filled all the avenues and paths with people; all the beer-gardens were gay with music and thronging crowds. Heretofore she had never felt at home among these multitudes of merry people, for her solitary life with her unhappy mother had made her unaccustomed to scenes of noise and confusion. But to-day, she would like nothing better than to have joined the throng, feeling that she really belonged there now; for had not she too found a sweetheart, like all these other girls dressed in their Sunday clothes? She ordered the carriage to stop in front of the Chinese tower, and sat there for a long time, listening, and really moved by the music of a band that would on any other day have provoked a smile. The people who passed her wondered at the beautiful, solitary Fräulein, who sat, lost in thought, gazing up at the tree tops. They

did not know that the color of the sky, up there between the two tall silver poplars, recalled certain eyes that were ever present to the lady in the carriage.

It was already dusk when she reached home after her drive. A note was lying on the table, that had been brought during her absence. She felt a shock of alarm as she took it up. If it should be from him—if he had written, instead of coming himself; and yet, although she had never seen his handwriting, it was impossible that these lines could be his; they were in a woman's hand. With a quieter heart she stepped to the window, and read these words:

“A person unknown to you, whose name is of no consequence, feels it her duty to warn you, honored Fräulein, against a man whose attentions to you can no longer be a secret, since he is regularly to be found every evening before your window, and to-day even went so far as to pay you a visit. This letter is to tell you that this man has a wife, and a child six years of age; a fact, however, which he carefully conceals from all his acquaintances. Leaving it to you to form your own opinion of this conduct, the writer signs herself respectfully, N. N.”

Half an hour after, the bell in Julie's room was rung. The old servant found his mistress sitting at her writing desk, with a calm face, but with traces of tears still on her cheeks, that she had forgotten to wipe away. She had just sealed a letter, which she now handed to the old man.

“See that this letter is delivered to-day, Erich, and at the studio; I do not know where Herr Jansen lodges. Tell the janitor to hand it to him the first thing to-mor-

row morning. And now, bring me something to eat. We were cheated out of our dinner. I—I shall die of exhaustion unless I eat something.”

The anonymous note was inclosed in the letter to Jansen. Julie had added nothing but the words :

“I shall be at home all day to-morrow. Come and give me back my faith in mankind and my own heart.

“Your

JULIE.”

CHAPTER VIII.

ON this very afternoon Felix had carried out a resolution that he had long had in mind, and had sought out the two friends, Elfinger and Rosenbusch, in their own quarters.

They occupied two rooms in the third story of a somewhat tumble-down house, which, situated in one of the quaint old streets of the city, concealed its little fantastically-framed windows under a far-projecting roof, like purblind eyes under bushy eyebrows.

Felix had often passed without ever having persuaded himself to enter the untidy-looking vestibule, and climb the dark stairs. To-day, since the dissipation of the previous night and the fact of its being Sunday condemned him to idleness, he determined to fulfill at length the duty he owed to civility. Moreover, he had begun the day before to take a great interest in Elfinger, and wished very much to have an hour's more intimate talk with him.

Luckily he chanced, at his first attempt, to knock at the right door, although, on account of the absolute darkness on the upper landing, it was impossible to make out the names ; and, upon entering, he saw Elfinger jump up hastily from a chair, where he had been sitting apparently entirely unoccupied.

As the street, which was not especially lively even on a weekday, reposed to-day in the most profound Sunday quiet, Felix wondered what it could have been that had held his attention there, especially when he noticed that the actor, who was generally so ready and self-possessed, showed evident signs of embarrassment as he hastened forward to welcome him, and, as if to keep him away from the window, forced him to take a seat upon the sofa.

But he soon recovered his easy bearing again.

“You are looking at the walls,” said he, “and are wondering that I still preserve these mementoes of my stage days, these pictures of great actors and my pretty colleagues of the fair sex, and even the obligatory laurel-wreath, with its satin ribbons, that is never lacking in any true actor’s domicile. If my present employer should ever by chance condescend to visit his clerk, I should, it is true, have done far better had I hung up a bulletin of the stock boards instead of the lithograph of Seydelmann as *Mephistophiles*. But, as I am safe up here from all *haute finance*, I think I may be allowed, without injury to my reputation as a sound accountant, to surround myself with all those relics that I hold sacred, even that all-too-flaming sword over there, that drove me from my paradise of the footlights.”

He pointed to a rapier that hung on the wall opposite the sofa, arranged with a few pistols and fencing-gloves

in the form of a trophy, underneath which hung a picture in water colors representing Elfinger in the costume of *Hamlet*.

"Yes," he continued, with a quiet smile; "if the point of that sword had not slipped in the hands of an unskillful *Laertes*, and entered the eye of the unfortunate *Hamlet*, I should hardly have had the pleasure of seeing you in my chambers just at this particular moment. I should probably have been sitting in my dressing-room at the theatre, painting myself to fit the character of an *Alba* or a *Richard III.*, for this evening's performance. Whether the public has lost much by it, I can't say. At all events, there is no doubt that I have gained."

"I am amazed that you can speak so cold-bloodedly of something that any other man would regard as the great misfortune of his life. After the high opinion of your talents that I was led to form by your performance of yesterday—"

"Do not allow yourself to be deceived by a little bit of coarse humor, my excellent friend. A man can rid himself of any other kind of homesickness sooner or later; but no one who has once felt himself at home behind the footlights can ever be free from homesickness for the stage. I must confess that I felt a real pang of envy when I took my little troupe of yesterday out of their box, and rigged them out for the play. Now, does not that positively border on insanity? But reason counts for nothing in such a case. I know that I, with my average talent, could never have attained the highest point of eminence, and that for that reason I ought to feel nothing but gratitude toward my friend *Laertes* for pushing me back into that obscurity where I can plod comfortably along on the golden path of mediocrity. And yet

all my philosophy oozes away the moment the conversation turns upon the theatre."

"But should not this be so? and since you are justified in thinking yourself a born actor, what reason have you for believing that the highest distinction would have been denied you? Why should not your fate strike you as a tragical one?"

"Because with all my good qualifications, especially for declamation, I am not only a born actor but also a born German, which, I admit, sounds like a very palpable paradox. But just consider our race a moment. In spite of some rare exceptions, that stand out almost like miracles and that merely prove the rule, it may be said to possess scarcely a single qualification that would enable it to reach any decided greatness in the art! Ought not the actor to be able to shed his own skin when he slips into that of another? And when did a true German ever exist that could put himself in another's place? When was he ever untrue to himself?—when did he ever deny his personal virtues and faults? Don't you see, the very thing that makes our people so respectable stands in the way of our acting. We are not a people given to impersonation, to posing, and to representation. We are sublime in our earnestness, and silly in our trifling. We like best to sit still in our private corner behind the stove, and we grow red and awkward if we have to pass through a room where there are ten unknown men, or even as many ladies, watching us. Only the highest problems of tragic poetry give us wings to lift us over these chasms. When we attempt to walk with metrical feet, which are shod with winged shoes, we get on very well. But on our own flat every-day extremities, we stumble so wretchedly that an ordinary Frenchman or Italian, who can neither

read nor write, appears like a prince of the blood beside us."

"I wish I were able to deny all this," said Felix. "Unfortunately we have no real society ; and where we have the germs of one, actors are as a rule excluded from it. But though that part of your art that has to do with the representation of human beings and a characteristic imitation of life suffers from this, the higher branches still continue to be our domain ; and if you compare the art of tragedy among the Italians or the French with our representations of Shakespeare and Goethe—"

"That is all very true," interrupted the actor ; "in what is spiritual and belongs to an inner consciousness, we can always bear comparison with our neighbors. But only wait ten years longer and you will see that not a soul here in Germany will ever think of going to see a tragedy, and our classical theatre will be then just such another puppet-show as the Théâtre Français is now. Ought we to be surprised at this? All tragedy is aristocratic. Why should the hero leave this world with such sublimity and grandeur if it were not that he found it too miserable for him to feel comfortable in? But he who finds the world a wretched place insults all those to whom it appears most charming, because, with their low desires, they are able to take comfort in it. And inasmuch as the good of the masses will become more and more the watchword, as time goes on, therefore he who towers above the masses must not be disappointed if he finds that he cannot be of much use either in real life or behind the footlights. Tragical heroes are only possible where social differences exist ; where the ordinary man looks on with a certain respect while a *Coriolanus* conquers and falls, without thinking to himself : 'It served

him right. Why did he insult us common folk?' But with our excellent, humane, democratic way of looking at things—"

"A depressing prospect, certainly! So the longer our nation goes on freeing itself from prejudices and conforming to true ideas of humanity, the less hope will there be that we shall ever be able to cut a good figure on the stage?"

"On the contrary, I think then is the time when we shall really first begin. Self-respect is one of the most important requisites even in the acting of a comedy. When we have once taken our place among the nations of Europe, when we have rid ourselves of our dullness and tactlessness in our dealings with the outside world, when we cease to be such wretched crawlers that we will go through any humiliation for our daily-bread's sake, and cannot conduct ourselves like gentlemen, then you will see how quickly we shall find the art of acting infused into our blood—we who have been for so many centuries mere zealous animals. To be sure, in regard to tragedy it is a question whether we shall ever succeed, in our better days, in attaining sufficient earnestness and reverence to enable us to keep in mind the fact that, as old Goethe says, 'awe is mankind's best quality'—"

He seemed about to talk still further of his hopes and fears; and Felix, to whom many of these ideas were new, and to whom the speaker, with his unselfish warmth, grew more and more attractive as he went on, would gladly have listened half through the night. But the door was noisily thrown open, and Rosenbusch made his appearance on his friend's threshold arrayed in a costume the comicality of which irresistibly swept away all these serious considerations.

He had had his red beard shaved off, leaving only a diminutive mustache and a pair of side whiskers ; his flowing hair was elegantly arranged ; he wore an old-fashioned black coat, and a tall stove-pipe hat, brushed smooth and shining.

“You may well laugh !” cried he, knitting his brows tragically at his friends. “If you only knew how a man felt who was yesterday in Paradise, and to-day is forced to get himself up in such a toilet as this, as if he were going to his execution. The executioner’s minion, who cut my hair, has just left me. Whoever wishes to have a lock of hair of the celebrated battle-painter Maximilian Rosenbusch will find them lying about, like useless wool, on the floor of the adjoining room. O Delila, for whom I have suffered this ! O Nanny, for whose sake I cut my noble hair !—for whom I dress myself in this Philistine fashion !”

He stopped, and now revealed to Felix that he was on the point of taking the most painful step of his life. In the opposite house lived the object of his desire, the muse of his songs, the beautiful daughter of a glovemaking, with whom he had been madly in love for the last six months, so that he could positively hold out no longer. He had received quite enough tokens to show him that his love was returned ; indeed he had an assurance, written on rose-colored paper and exhibiting one or two orthographical liberties, that if the parents did not say no their little daughter would certainly say yes. In order to have this question decided, he had been obliged to assume his present masquerading costume, notwithstanding the fact that the carnival was still far off. For papa glovemaking had no very exalted opinion of artists of the ordinary type.

"Therefore, my friends, drop a tear for the departed splendors of my noble head, and pray for my poor soul, that it may soon be released from this purgatory and admitted to the joys of the blessed. And, by-the-way, how is it, Elfinger? Don't you want to slip on your best coat and come with me? Then the whole thing would be finished at one go."

Felix saw that the actor blushed, and cast a look of displeasure at his loquacious friend.

"Ah! to be sure!" replied the latter, stepping in front of the glass and winking at Felix as he passed, "you haven't slept off your headache from last night. Hm! Another time, then. It seems to me, do you know, I look devilish respectable, and the glovemaker's little daughter will make no end of a good match in catching a person of my tone and style. Look, there she sits over there at her post, the little witch, and at the other window, completely absorbed in her work, is her pious sister. *Sua cuique*— Well, I won't quote any further, Elfinger, my boy! But now, I must wend my way to the high tribunal. Will you accompany me, friend baron? You must support me with spiritual comfort, in case I should show signs of weakness by the way. To be sure, I have just been working up my courage by three beautiful strophes; but a lyric of that sort, strongly diluted with water, does not last long, and a more spiritual elixir for the heart cannot be prepared off-hand. May Heaven take me in its safe keeping! Amen! Well, Elfinger, you shall hear before long how it turns out!"

Upon this he pressed his hat down firmly on his forehead, nodded to his friend with a comical expression of misery and despair, and dragged Felix with him from the room.

On the stairs he suddenly stood still and said, in a suppressed and mysterious voice :

“Our friend up-stairs has the same trouble worse than I have. He is smitten with the other one ; but she is a little saint, as much of a nun, thanks to her education with the English sisters, as my little witch is a child of the world for the same reason. Now just conceive of it, the more my little imp carries on—it will be hard work making a sensible housewife of her—the more zealously does our good Fanny confess and do penance and pray, and it really looks as if she were seriously intent upon gaining a saint’s halo. The fact is the girls never associate with sensible people, and for that reason one of us must sacrifice himself so that the ice will at last be broken, although I confess it is pure madness on my part to think of marrying. You have no idea, my dear friend, what extraordinary cobwebs gather in an old Munich burgher-house like this. Well, a few fresh fellows like us—I imagine it would not take us long to bring new life into it, if we were only once inside !”

He sighed, and appeared not to be in the most courageous mood, notwithstanding his brave words. Felix accompanied him across the street and saw him enter the narrow, arched door next to the glove store, which was closed on account of its being Sunday—going in with an assumed air of boldness, as if he were going to a dance.

Then he himself wandered aimlessly down the street. In what direction should he turn his steps ? In the whole city there was no one who would be looking for him to-day, and the one to whom he felt most drawn was, strangely enough, on Sunday afternoons farther out of his reach than at any other time.

He was deliberating whether he should not hire a horse again and dash away across the country, when companionship was unexpectedly thrown in his way, of a kind that a man in his frame of mind could not but welcome.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS way led him along the Dultplatz, past the beer-garden in which he had sat with his friends on his first Sunday in Munich. The music was playing as before, but the people sat about under the lanterns, that had just been lighted, in rather a sleepy and listless way, for the day showed as yet no sign of growing cooler.

Near the fence that separated the garden from the street, a Dachau peasant-family had taken possession of one of the tables, leaving only one end free. Their extraordinary, ugly costume attracted the attention of Felix as he went wandering by. But his gaze soon turned from their ridiculous dress and fixed on a slim girlish figure, closely wrapped in a dark shawl, who sat at the other end of the table, with a full glass and an empty plate before her, at which she seemed to have been staring for some time, with her head resting on her hands and her elbows planted on the table, as if utterly regardless of what was going on about her. Nothing could be seen of the face, but a little, white, short nose; her straw hat and a veil that hung half down over the little hands threw the rest into shadow. But the little nose, and the thick red hair, carelessly confined by a net, left not a moment's doubt in Felix's mind that this picture of solitary melancholy was no other than Red Zenz.

As he stepped softly up to her, touched her familiarly on the shoulder, and pronounced her name, she looked up with a frightened start, and, with eyes red from weeping, gazed into the face of the unexpected comforter, as if she took him for a ghost. But the moment she recognized him, she hastily wiped her eyes with the back of her little round hand, and smiled upon him with undisguised pleasure. He asked compassionately what it was that made her so heavy-hearted, and why she sat here all alone; and, drawing up a chair, he seated himself between one of the horrible young peasant-girls and the melancholy little Bacchante. Then she told him what the trouble was. "Black Pepi," her friend, the girl with whom she had been living, had suddenly "proved false" to her, because her (Pepi's) lover, a young surgeon, had declared red to be the most beautiful color. He afterward apologized for it by saying that, of course, with his profession, it was only natural that he should prefer the color of the blood to any other. But it had for some time past appeared to Pepi that her faithless lover paid rather more attention to her friend than was permissible in such a case; and so, after a very violent scene, she had not only broken off the friendship, but had given her notice that she could no longer share her quarters with her. Furthermore, inasmuch as Zenz was still owing rent for several months, she had seized upon the few things she had to hold as security, and had then driven her from the house with only the clothes she had on at the time.

"Only see," said the girl, lifting her dark shawl; "she did not even leave me a respectable dress: if it had not been for the shawl that the landlady lent me, I should have been ashamed to go across the street."

And it was really so; she wore a simple sack of striped

cotton under her black covering, that she carefully wrapped about her again. But now it began to look as though she no longer troubled herself in the least about the adventure that had so recently made her weep. The pale little face that she turned toward her neighbor, brightly illuminated by the lantern, had even lost its expression of anger at this insulting treatment and betrayal of friendship, and beamed again with light-heartedness and irrepressible enjoyment.

“And what are you going to do, Zenz?”

“I don’t know yet. I shall manage to find some place to stay at. I could go to the Rochus garden, or the Neusigl, where I lodged when I first came here; but the waiters there have keys to the doors, and I have found that it is not safe there. And anywhere else, where I am not known, they might think that I would not be able to pay for the room, and I really have no money but a few kreutzers. I should have to pawn the ring that I have from my poor dead mother. Well, the day is not over yet, and I can think the matter over again.”

“To be sure,” continued she, after a pause, during which Felix sat, as if in a dream, gazing at her red lips and her white teeth, that one could have counted when she spoke, “to be sure, I might fare well enough if I only would! So well, that that false black cat Pepi would envy me.”

“If you only would, Zenz?”

“Yes, if I were willing to be wicked!” she added, in a low tone, and for a moment her face grew serious. But in the next instant she laughed merrily again, as if she would laugh away the flush that had suffused her face.

“Do you know an artist named Rossel?”

“Certainly. Edward Rossel. What of him?”

"He came to see me about a week ago. He said he had seen the figure that Herr Jansen modeled from me, and he said, if I would come to him and stand as a model, he would pay me three times as well for it."

"And why haven't you gone to him?"

"Hm!—because I didn't like him. I will not hire myself out in that way for the gentlemen, so that every one will know me and say: 'Aha! that is Red Zenz!' I am sorry enough that I stood to please Herr Jansen, although he is such a good gentleman. But now they know my address, and they think that is as much as to say that I will go and be a model for any one who wants me."

"Didn't you like Herr Rossel?"

"No. Not at all. He doesn't look in the least as if he were an artist, and wanted to study from a model. He made such big eyes—No! I sent him off with a flea in his ear. And then he went to Pepi to get her to persuade me. But she knows me. She went to him herself, for she thought he would just as soon have one as another. But he only gave her a gulden and sent her away again, saying that he had no time just then, and that he happened to particularly want red hair. Then she flew out again about red. I have heard though that Herr Rossel lives like a prince, and Pepi said that if I were not a fool—at that time she was not so down on me—I might make my fortune."

"But are you going to continue such a fool all your life long, Zenz?"

"I don't know," replied she, frankly. "Nobody is sure of herself when she is young and has plenty of time on her hands. But I think as long as I have my five senses about me—"

She hesitated.

"Well, Zenz?" he asked, taking one of her little hands, with its fingers' ends roughened by work, in one of his.

"So long," she said, quietly, "I will not do such a thing to please anyone whom I do not love."

"And how must the man look whom you could love? Only like Herr Jansen?"

She laughed. "Oh! no. He is so much older than I. I only like him in just the same way that I might have liked my father. He must be younger and very nice, and—"

She stopped abruptly, looked askance at him, a little coquettishly, and said: "But what nonsense we are talking! Won't you eat and drink something, or has the scarecrow next you there taken away all your appetite!"

She glanced disapprovingly at his neighbors, who looked, with their nodding cap-borders and strait-laced Sunday suits, for all the world like stuffed dolls, and did not understand a word of what had been said by the other two.

"Zenz," said Felix, without answering her; "do you know you could stop over night in my quarters just as well as not? I have two rooms: you could bolt the door between them if you should feel any fear of me, and each room has a separate entrance. What do you think about it?"

"You are only joking!" she hastily replied, without the slightest embarrassment; "you would never think of encumbering yourself with such a poor, ugly thing as I am."

"Ugly? I don't find you at all ugly, Zenz. And if you only cared to be a model for me, as you do for Herr Jansen— Do you know, he has kept me for weeks study-

ing an old skeleton and a lay figure, and I am forgetting over such work the very sight of a human being."

She shook her head, laughed, and then said, becoming serious again :

"That was only meant in joke, of course. I am not so simple as to let myself be talked into believing that you are really a sculptor !"

"Well, just as you like, Zenz. I won't try to persuade you to do anything you don't like. Come, take some beer ; a new cask has just been broached."

She drank eagerly out of his glass ; and then a spirited overture was played which interrupted their conversation for a time. Even after this they talked entirely about other things. She told him about her former life in Salzburg, how strict her mother had been with her, how often she had known want, and how often of a Sunday she had sat quietly in her chamber and had wished she might be allowed, just for once, to join the merry, gayly-dressed throng outside, that she could only look at from a distance. No doubt her mother had really cared for her, but for all that she let her feel that her existence was an eternal reproach and burden to her. Of course she cried when she lost her mother, but her grief did not last long. The pleasure of feeling herself free soon dried her tears. Now, to be sure—all alone as she was, without a soul in all the wide world to trouble itself whether she lived or died—now, she sometimes felt that she would give up everything if she could only be back again at her mother's side.

"That is always the way," concluded she, with a nod of the head that looked droll enough in its seriousness, "one never has what one wants ; and still, people say one ought to be contented. Sometimes I wish I were dead.

And then again I feel as if I would like to promenade up and down the live-long summer through, wear beautiful dresses, live like a princess, and—”

“And be made love to by a prince—isn’t it so?”

“Of course. Alone, one can have no happiness. What would be the use of my princess’s dresses, unless I could drive some one perfectly crazy with them?”

He gazed so steadfastly in her eyes, that she suddenly blushed and was silent. The strange mixture of light-heartedness and melancholy in the poor child, of enjoyment of life and reserve, of secret love and introspective moralizing, attracted him more and more. Then, too, the night, the subdued light of the lanterns, and the stirring music, and his own loneliness of heart, and his seven-and-twenty years—

“Zenz,” he whispered, bending over so near to her ear that his lips almost touched her neck, “if you would only care just a little bit for me, why shouldn’t we fare just as well as if you really were a princess and I a prince?”

She did not answer. Her lips were parted, she breathed quickly, and her nostrils quivered, while her eyes were tightly shut, as if it were all a dream from which she did not wish to wake.

“We could lead a life like that in Paradise,” continued he, gently stroking with his own the two little hands that she had laid side by side on the table. “We are both of us two stray children for whom no one cares. If we should stay at home a year and a day, and never let ourselves be seen, who would inquire what had become of us? All about us people live and love and think only about themselves! Why should not we think only of ourselves, too?”

"Go away from me!" answered she, in a low voice. "You are not in earnest. You think about me? Not even in your dreams. How can you care for me? Such a red-haired little monkey, as Black Pepi called me to-day!"

"Your hair is very pretty. I remember yet how pretty it made you look, when you let it hang loose over your blue cloak that morning in Herr Jansen's studio, when you ran away so fast. And now I will hold you tight by it. Come! I thought we were going? It begins to be cool; at least, I see that you are trembling."

"Not from cold!" she said, in a strange tone, as she stood up and wrapped her shawl tightly about her.

Then, without waiting for him to ask her, she took his arm and they left the garden.

CHAPTER X.

SHE did not ask where he was leading her, and indeed spoke very little more, and scarcely betrayed by any sign whether she was listening to what he said, or was entirely absorbed in her own thoughts. He had begun by telling her, with a kind of forced liveliness, about all sorts of things that he thought would interest her; about the women in the countries on the other side of the ocean, their way of dressing, their songs and dances, and their ideas about love and men. As she made no reply to it all, he at last grew silent too. For a moment he felt a keen pang of pain, when, by the light of a street lamp, he caught sight of his own shadow and that of the girl

swaying before them on the ground. How came he to constitute himself the knight of this poor creature, who clung so tightly to his arm that he realized well enough it would not be easy to shake her off again?

Six weeks ago, in another city—it was a summer night, too—in what a different mood had he returned home from a walk, and in what different company! But that was passed forever. Should he wander about in the desert all his life long in sackcloth and ashes, and turn his back upon all the happiness of existence? Who would be benefited by his sacrifice? And yet, why could he not suppress this obstinate pain, this remembrance of past days that sought to fill him with disgust at the light-hearted life of this “city of pleasure?”

He would not let his life be ruined by a spectre, he would carry his head high and sneer away all attacks of sentimentality. Laughing defiantly, to silence the low, far-off voice in his heart, he released his arm from the girl's, only to put it still tighter and more tenderly about her shoulder.

“Zenz,” he said, “you are a darling little sweetheart. It would be a sin if you should not know where to lay your head. Do you see that house over there, with the lamp burning in front? That is where I live, and no one has a key to all the doors. How would it be if we should play hide-and-seek there for a time, with all this tiresome world?”

He merrily lifted her up from the ground, as if he would carry her over the street into the house; but she suddenly released herself and pointed anxiously to two riders, who were already so close upon them that they were forced to run to get by them.

“You little goose!” he laughed, “surely you are not

afraid of two people on horseback, and they peaceful Sunday riders—”

The word died on his lips. As the light of the lantern fell on the faces of the two horsemen, he recognized in the one the lean profile and the black imperial of Lieutenant Schnetz, and in the other a little mustached gentleman, with a straw hat and a light riding-jacket.

No ; it must be a mistake ! How came *he* here ? He had been deceived by a resemblance. It was only because he had so recently been thinking about past times, that their shadow had risen up before him. What could possibly bring the uncle of his betrothed to Munich, and in the company of the lieutenant—he who never left his niece ?

And yet—as he looked he heard him say a word or two to Schnetz, and then there was a merry laugh.

The two rode unsuspectingly by, and long after their voices had died away, Felix stood gazing listlessly after them in the darkness without rousing himself from his thoughts.

It was he—Irene’s uncle. But how did he come here ? True, he had distant relatives in Munich ; but it was years since he had left off all intercourse with them. Did he know, perhaps, that Felix was here in the city ? Was that why he had come, and had he perhaps brought his ward with him ? And even if it were all an accident—even the acquaintance with Schnetz—must not he inevitably learn from the latter that the fugitive had hidden himself here under the disguise of a sculptor’s blouse ?

“What is the matter ?” asked the girl, at last growing impatient. “Do you know these gentlemen ?”

“Ah ! Yes,” he answered, suddenly recalling where he was and with whom he was standing here in the street.

With a deep sigh he brought himself back to the rôle of protector to this poor child. He stammered a meaningless remark about the breed of the horses and about skill in riding, and once more offered Zenz the arm he had withdrawn in his momentary confusion.

He led her thus across the street and into the house.

When they had reached his rooms, where the windows stood open toward the garden, he hastened to light a lamp. And then he forced himself, in his character of host, to show the now somewhat silent and shy girl the arrangement of his rooms, and all the curiosities that he had brought back from his travels. On the table lay a little Damascus dagger, which she took up and looked at curiously. He told her how a young Spanish lady had given it to him in Mexico. And then he remembered a bottle of sherry that was standing in his closet, and brought it and drew the cork.

"This is all the hospitality I can offer you," said he, still very absently, setting down a full glass before her.

She shook her head, and could not be prevailed upon even to taste the wine. And in all that she did she had grown very shy and timid, like a young swallow that has flown into an inhabited room, and keeps close pressed into a corner, where you can see the frightened heart beating under its feathered breast.

"Will you not look and see whether you can make yourself comfortable on the sofa?"

She did not answer, and sat still in a chair by the window, her hat still on her head, and her shawl wrapped closely about her.

"A beautiful night," she said softly, at last. "How far you can see from here over the city! You are very happy to be able to live in such a beautiful place."

“Well, you can share the happiness, then. Only make yourself quite at home. Are you tired?”

“Oh, no! but please don’t trouble yourself about me. If you want to go to sleep, I will sit here and will not stir.”

He came and stood beside her by the open window.

“Well, Zenz,” he said, “you must not mind if I leave you alone now. The day has been so hot, the wretched music of that band and all sorts of other things have given me a furious headache, and I had better get to sleep. Good-night, child! If you want anything to amuse you, here are all manner of things—photographs and books of pictures. I will light you another candle. And now, make yourself comfortable. You can bolt the door from this side, and my housekeeper goes to market early in the morning, so that you are quite safe from her. And so, good-night!”

He touched her cheek lightly. She raised her face toward him, quietly and submissively, and looked at him half inquiringly, half afraid. Her lips, with their white teeth, were parted—yet now without a laugh—and her hands lay quietly folded in her lap. Yet, as he bent over her, he only touched the hair upon her forehead lightly with his lips.

“Good-night!” he said again.

Then he went into the adjoining room, and closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

AT the foot of his bed stood a cabinet in which he preserved all kinds of relics, diaries, letters—mementos of his lost love. He thrust in his hand at random, and drew out a portfolio containing all Irene's letters, from the first unimportant notes, in which she sent him some communication from her uncle—her uncle had an aversion to pen and ink, and was very glad to make use of his niece as a secretary—to the sheets on which the fate of his life stood written.

He lit a lamp and spread out before him this chronicle of the happiest years of his youth. Thus he sat with his back to the door of the sitting-room, now reading, and now mechanically taking up one sheet after the other. What could they tell him that was new? And yet these fine, slender letters reminded him of the hand that had written them. He had never seen any other hand that had expressed so much character, so much delicacy and firmness, so much flexibility and noble repose. He had often teased Irene about this, by telling her that he would undertake to decide from the appearance of her hands whether she was glad or sad, laughing or crying. The handwriting, too, was a very correct expression of her impulsive and self-controlled inner nature. Now, as he picked out here and there some particular sheet and glanced over it again, the whole past rose up so vividly before him that he felt as if he must suffocate in the close, lonely, sad atmosphere that surrounded him; as if he were lying in his grave, and a voice arose from these

pages and repeated to him the history of his own life, that now lay ruined and shattered for ever more.

“Your dear, long letter from Mexico,” she wrote, “I gave to uncle to read. He is always teasing me, because I assert that the letters of two lovers are written to be read by two pairs of eyes only. It was not possible, he declared, that an epistle of sixteen closely-written pages, like your last, could be a mere love-letter; no human being could stand such a thing, and we no longer lived, thank God, in that paradise of letter-writers—the time of Werther. So I showed him the Mexican letter, and he gave it back to me with one of his most comical faces. He declared he had never before come across such a lover; here he was giving a detailed description of a charming young girl, passing from one handsome woman to another, as if he could think of nothing that would give greater pleasure to his far-off sweetheart. That was certainly rather the opposite of a love-letter; but if I was content to make the acquaintance of all these Paquitas, Chatitas, and Mariquitas, he would not begrudge me the pleasure, and congratulated me upon my slight disposition to jealousy, which, to be sure, was a very useful trait for me to have in the case of a traveler of this sort.

“I laughed, and he went off to his club, shaking his head.

“But then I grew very serious, and looked into my own heart and tried to make out why it was that I really did not feel the faintest spark of jealousy. Perhaps because there is room for nothing in my heart but my love for you; neither for conceit, nor fear, nor desires, nor doubt. I have never stopped to consider *why* it was that we two should have loved one another. It *was* so; I felt

that even more strongly than I did my own existence. And for that very reason it seems to me inconceivable that it can ever be any different. For you do not love me because I am the most beautiful, the wisest, the wittiest, or the most lovable person that you have ever seen, but because I am *I*, the one person, with all that I have and all that I lack, that you will never find a second time. So, though you may find many beyond the sea who are more charming, more attractive, more brilliant, you will never find *me* again; and because I know that, I can, when evening comes, lay your sixteen-page letter from over the ocean under my pillow, and very quietly go to sleep and dream of you, without feeling any desire to snatch you, with poison and dagger, from the attractions of some olive-colored creole.

“For I know, dearest love—vain as it may sound, and little store as I set by my few talents and attractions—that I alone can make you happy as no other can; not so happy that you will never have a wish unfulfilled; that I shall appear to you at all times the crown and jewel of all wives, and you the chosen favorite of fortune; but as happy as it is possible for one human being to make another, so happy will I make you and you make me; and because we can never comprehend this, but ask ourselves each day why it should be so, therefore our happiness shall have no end, and no phenomenon of beauty, grace, or wit, that ever crosses your path, will be capable of disturbing this happiness.

“My old Christel would raise her eyebrows very ominously at this point, and would repeat ‘unjustified, entirely unjustified!’ But I cannot help it; as a rule I am timid and skeptical about anything good that is promised to me. But when I think of our love, I overflow with

boldness and confidence. What harm can fortune do us? Is not our love itself fortune? What tricks of fate ought we to fear, when we bear this fate, the most important and the greatest of all, within us?

“You will not feel tempted to translate this letter for the benefit of your Spanish lady friends. They would only pity you for having a sweetheart who would write you about such serious matters. Ah! and yet my whole heart laughs when I think that they *are* so serious with us!”

In a later letter, that had been addressed to Paris, she wrote :

“Yesterday, I was at court again, and to-day I thank heaven that I managed to bear it, and that the headache which was caused by its tiresomeness is only a moderate one. This undoubtedly proceeds from the fact that I sat at supper next to the ambassador for ———, who has been in India, and who described to me, in great detail and for the third time, the burning of a widow that he had once been present at. (They say that he always tells the gentlemen a similar story about a tiger-hunt.) For this reason it happened that I could think a great deal about you, and when I can do that I am always happy. My darling, have you yet learned to put a good face on a bad matter? To howl with the wolves? To do homage to ‘his serene highness your sovereign prince,’ without letting your own sovereignty come out too plainly? I am afraid that, inasmuch as they don’t dance the bolero here at the court balls, and as the whole *tempo* of our life is an *andante maestoso*, you will soon grow impatient with all this again, and give umbrage to some of the best and

best-intentioned people in the world. No one can understand your feeling better than I do ; only to think that your poor sweetheart, whom you have always teased about her good breeding and her respect for conventional forms, is looked upon by the society of this city as a very emancipated individual, or, at all events, is notorious for being a *tête forte* ! The reason of this is, that I generally am quite dumb in the midst of all tiresome talk and whispered gossip ; but if the conversation happens to turn upon anything deeper, upon affairs of real human interest and not merely upon court events, then I express my true opinion, without troubling myself to care whether it falls in with the court tone or not. And the good people look on this as very pronounced, and not at all good form for a young lady.

“ But don’t you see, my dearest, in this way I manage to make this whole world of forms bearable, by holding my human part ready in reserve, and looking upon all these absurd prejudices and narrow conventionalities as something purely superficial and accidental, as unimportant as the other habits and customs we have in our toilet, behavior, and our living and dying ? And although the forms of the circle in which our lot has happened to place us are very often more tiresome and senseless than in other stations, still existence can nowhere be entirely formless, and at the most can only seem so to one who only looks upon it as a traveler may look, and who, as an irresponsible spectator, does not feel bound to submit himself to any of the constraint that is incumbent upon the natives. Have not you yourself told me that even among the students a severe etiquette prevails, according to which they sing and drink, and fight duels, and make up their quarrels ? If young people, in the years of their happiest

freedom, cannot amuse themselves without submitting to the restraint of customs and conventionality, why should you be so angry with our poor aristocracy, that endeavors to console itself by these wretched devices for the emptiness of its existence ?

“It is only among ourselves that we need not submit to any formality ! Only when in his most intimate circle can one be a human being ! And, since it is so, I think we can easily spare the little tribute of restraint that we have to render to our social equals.

“So do come back, and behave like a pink of propriety, my darling scapegrace ; and try and make your seven-league boots accommodate themselves to the minuet step of our dear capital at least once in every month or two. Then when we are alone again in our own four walls, I will do all I can to make up to you for the *ennui* you have suffered ; and I will gladly dance the bolero with you, if you will only teach me how.”

This letter was soon followed by their reunion. With what a feeling he took up all the little notes, that at that time had but a few streets to go, to bring messages about a walk, a visit for which he was to call for her, or some incident that had made it impossible to keep an engagement ! These notes showed, now and then, traces of some more serious misunderstanding that had taken place between the two lovers : an appeal to be very gentle to-day, a promise not to refer by a syllable to the dispute of the day before. He seemed to see again all that he had once read between these lines.

And then came her last letter, the letter of parting :

“I am quite quiet now, Felix, or at least as quiet as

one is when pain has exhausted all one's strength. I write to you this very night, for of course there can be no thought of sleep. I have again and again thought it all over from the beginning, and have each time arrived at the same conclusion—that I deceived myself in believing through all these years that I was necessary to your happiness. Do not try to shake this belief; I am sadly humbled, Felix, very wretched and miserable because of this confession; but I am as sure that it is true, as I am that I still live and breathe.

“I know that you still love me, perhaps quite as much as you have always loved me. But one thing I did not know before, and I learn it now with pain: you love something better than you do me—your freedom.

“You would be willing to sacrifice it, partly from chivalry, in order that you might keep your promise; partly from kind-heartedness, for you must feel how my whole life has hung on you, and how slowly these wounds will heal. And yet, *it must be!* How could anything that would not make you perfectly happy ever be happiness to me?

“You shall be free again, and you may be so without any anxiety about me. I have more strength than I seem to have. There is only one thing I cannot bear: to see a sacrifice laid at my feet.

“Even if you were now willing to disclose your secret to me, it would not alter my resolve. I would not have you think that I wanted to wring anything from you, which you would not give to me of your own accord. But that you should make a distinction between that which you share with me, and that which belongs only to yourself . . . it may seem narrow-minded or weak or

arrogant of me, but I cannot help myself, I cannot rise above it.

"I shall never feel toward you, Felix, any differently from what I do now ; I shall never feel toward another as I do toward you. I have to thank you for the best and dearest feelings that I have ever possessed and experienced. No lapse of time can change this in the least—as little as it can my resolve.

"Think kindly of me, too—without bitterness. And now farewell !—farewell forever !

IRENE."

He knew this letter by heart, word for word, and yet he read it through again, word for word, and when he came to the end all the pain, and defiance, and anger against himself and against her blazed up within him, as it had in the hour when he first read it. Her calmness, her gentle strength, that he used to laugh at as artificial, although he knew how free she was from all feminine tricks ; her clear comprehension and her courage in asserting it : all this humiliated him anew. Then, indeed, he had comforted himself with the belief that a word from him, a look, her name merely pronounced by his lips, would demolish the barrier that she had raised up between them, as easily as one blows down a tower of cards. He had bitterly deceived himself. Neither by entreaties nor stratagems had he succeeded in again gaining access to her. He had to admit, with a new feeling of humiliation, that she was the stronger. Then at last he too had, as he believed, bound his breast in the seven-fold bands of iron, and had turned away from her. For the last time he wrote to her a short, proud, but not unkind letter, almost like an ultimatum from one power to another. He had felt some hope in regard to it for that very rea-

son. When it remained unanswered, he acknowledged that all was over.

His face had sunk down on the little portfolio, he had closed his eyes and had given himself up, with a kind of ecstasy, to all these bitter-sweet memories. The thought that there was any one near him had passed completely out of his mind, and his dreams began to lapse deeper and deeper into the haziness that usually precedes unconsciousness.

Suddenly he roused himself with a start. A light hand had touched his shoulder. As he turned hurriedly, he saw Zenz standing behind him. She hastily stepped back again as far as the threshold of the door, which she had softly opened, and stood there in the frame thus made in the exact attitude of Jansen's "Dancing Girl," her arms thrown back and holding, instead of the tambourine, the little plate on which Felix had handed her the wine. The candle-light that streamed in from the sitting-room, and the little lamp by the side of Felix's bed, doubly illuminated the slim, youthful figure, and its shadow flickering back and forth heightened the weird charm. She stood there with her profile slightly turned upward, motionless as a statue, gazing straight before her. It was not until quite a time had elapsed, and she had begun to feel tired, that she asked, still without turning her head, whether he was not going to begin to sketch? He rose and took a step toward her, and then stood still again.

"My dear child," he said, controlling himself with difficulty, "it is too late for that. The night has grown cool—you will catch cold. Come, I thank you very much. You are a beautiful girl, and I—am not made of stone. Now go back and go to sleep. To-morrow—to-morrow we will sketch."

She gave a start, and he noticed with amazement that she began to tremble violently. She gave but one timid glance at him. Suddenly, the tears streamed from her eyes, she threw down the plate with such force that it shivered into fragments, rushed back from the threshold into the sitting-room and violently slammed the door behind her.

An instant after, he heard the bolt pushed to.

“For God’s sake, child!” he cried, “what has come to you all of a sudden? What have I done to offend you? Open the door, and let us have a sensible talk together. Didn’t I tell you that I had a headache? And who ever heard of such an idea as sketching in the middle of the night? Zenz! don’t you hear? Won’t you make it up again?”

All in vain. After wasting his entreaties and at last his anger, for some time longer, on the tightly-closed door, he was finally obliged to give it up. His blood was in a whirl; he could not conceive now how he could have repulsed the poor creature in such cold-blooded fashion. “Perhaps her anger will pass over, if I leave her to herself for a while,” he thought.

“I am going out to take a little walk,” he cried through the key-hole. “I must have a breath of fresh air. When I come back again, perhaps my headache will be gone and your fit of temper, too. In the mean while, pass away the time as pleasantly as you can.”

And he really did go out into the night; but he returned again before a quarter of an hour had passed—he was drawn back by some power that he himself could not understand.

As he entered his sleeping-room, where the lamp was still burning steadily, it was empty. He passed quickly

through the door, which was now unbolted, into the sitting-room. But here, too, no trace could be found of his guest, search as he would behind the curtains and in the dark corners. The light had not been extinguished and a bat had flown into the room, and the exertion of hunting him out again threw him into a perspiration. When at last he succeeded, and, exhausted by such a variety of excitement, had sunk back upon the sofa, he found that all the little knickknacks, which he had spread before her when they first arrived, were still lying on the table in the same order in which he had left them. The little dagger which his creole friend had given him was the only thing he missed, and he could not find it though he searched for it everywhere.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are summer nights that are not made for sleep. The moon shines far brighter than at other times, as if a lamp were burning at its full height in the sleeping-room instead of a mere night-light. People strolling along, absorbed in thought and feeling the flagstones under their feet still warm—for they have been drinking in the fierce glow of the sun the livelong summer day—catch themselves in the act of crossing over out of the moonlight to the shady side, just as one does in the hot noontide. On such nights as this, sounds of life and merriment are heard throughout the city long after the police have sounded the hour for retiring; the couples that wander through the streets seem unable to find their way home; young fellows march along arm-in-arm, in long rows stretching the whole width of the road, as if advancing to battle against some invisible enemy, singing all the while as tenderly and sweetly as they know how, or else shrieking and yelling like a troop of wild Indians. Here and there, where a window stands open and a *sonata* of Beethoven floats out into the night, they suddenly hush their noise and listen, only to break out in a wild burst of applause the moment the music ceases. On such a night solitary youth lies dreaming, with open eyes, till long past midnight, of

the glories of the future ; and solitary age thinks sadly how glorious the past was ; and at last they fall asleep over their musing, and slumber quietly, until some young cock in a neighboring roost, who cannot sleep himself, gives a glance up to heaven and begins to crow with such vigor at the setting moon, which he mistakes for the rising sun, that the sleepers start up again, throw off the bedclothes from their hot limbs, and creep to the window to see whether the night is really at an end. After this there is no more sleep for the aged ; but they who are young lie down once more and soon make up for all that they have lost.

Such was the night that followed that Sunday. Of those in whose fate and adventures we are interested, none went to bed before midnight, though in truth some other sprite than the charm of the sultry night had possession of their hearts and senses. Even the good Angelica, who to the best of our knowledge was not in love, and who rejoiced moreover in that softest of pillows, a good conscience, sat at the open window of her little virgin bower, in which a lamp was dimly burning, half through the night, twining her curls and heavily sighing and dropping into a doze, until her head would strike against the window-sash, when she would start up and begin once more to spin her sorrowful summer-night's thoughts. She had been at Julie's door that afternoon to inquire what had been the upshot of this bad business. But no one was at home. And so she was waiting impatiently for the following day.

It was later still before Julie could bring herself to go to bed. The windows in her chamber stood open so as to let in the night-air through the openings in the closed blinds. But with the air the magical moonbeams streamed

in too, and made a pattern on her green silk coverlet ; her thoughts were lost in its mazes, so that she could not close her eyes. She felt as if she had never been at once so happy and so wretched. At heart she did not doubt for a moment that everything really was just as it stood in the baleful letter ; that she would never possess him whom she loved. His own puzzling behavior, the way in which he had suddenly broken off and rushed out of the room, confirmed the anonymous accusation only too well. But the thought that she loved him, and that he returned her love, crowded out all others, and made her so glad in the depths of her heart, that no hostile fate could crush the rejoicing within her. So he is to “give her back her faith in her own heart !” What a senseless phrase ! When had she ever believed in anything as she believed in the strength and truth and invincibility of this feeling, in the feeling that it was worth while to have lived through a long youth without love and happiness for the sake of this man, so that now she might lavish upon him a hoarded wealth of passion ?

She could not help smiling when it occurred to her how often she had thought that she had done with the world, and could look back without regret upon the years of youth she had lost. What had become of those ten anxious years ? Had she really lived in them or only dreamed of them ? Was she not as young and inexperienced, as thirsty for happiness and as coy in its presence, as she had ever been in the first blooming years of her girlhood ? Yes, she felt the courage of her earliest youth, when she still believed in miracles, bubbling up within her from an inexhaustible spring. She made no attempt to close her eyes to what could and would happen. But that this love, hopeless as it seemed, would be a source of

unspeakable happiness to her, that in the sanctuary of her heart she would never cease to look upon this man as belonging to her—all this she admitted to herself in words so plain that, as she lay there wide awake in the moonlight, they sometimes found utterance in a half-audible soliloquy.

Then she marveled at the suddenness with which it had all come about, but she soon convinced herself again that this was just as it should be. She tried hard to picture to herself the kind of wife he might have. But she could not; it seemed to her impossible that he could ever have loved any one but herself. She closed her eyes and tried to recall his features to her mind. Singularly enough she met with no great success. His eyes were all that she could distinctly call up before her, and his voice seemed always to be close to her ear. She rose and stepped to the window, and opened the blinds a little to see if the night were not almost over. She herself did not know why she should thus look forward to the morning, for there was little hope that it would bring her anything new or good. But it would bring *him*, she could count on that. With burning lips she drew in the mild night-air, and listened to a love-song, which a solitary youth sang as he passed under her window.

She understood each word, and as he ended she repeated the closing verses softly, and sighed as she shut the blinds again. Then she lay down and at last fell asleep.

The day had long dawned outside, but the green twilight in which she lay caused her to dream on undisturbed. It struck seven, eight, nine, from the clock on the Theatinerkirche. Then at last she awoke, feeling as refreshed as if she had just emerged from bathing in the sea. It

was some time before she could think clearly of all that had happened yesterday and would probably happen to-day, but as she did so a vague fear and anxiety came over her. She hastened to dress, so that she might go out and ask whether any letter had come. When at last she opened the door into the parlor, her figure wrapped in a loose robe, and her hair thrust carelessly under a pretty cap, her foot hit against some heavy object that took up the whole breadth of the threshold. As the blinds were closed in this room also, she did not see at first, owing to her short-sightedness, what it was that lay in her way. But the object immediately began to move of its own accord, and raised itself up before her, and she felt a cold tongue on her hand and saw that the intruder was no other than Jansen's venerable Newfoundland dog. The start he gave her was almost instantly lost in the greater one with which she found herself saying, "Where the dog is, the master will not be far away." And she was right, for there, in the back part of the room, leaning against the stove, was a dark figure with disheveled hair, standing as immovable in its place as she herself stood in the doorway, deprived of all power to move a limb or open her lips.

Just at this moment the other door opened, and the old servant stepped in and turned to the man at the stove with a gesture which was half indignant, half timid, but which said plainer than words that it had been impossible to turn away this uncomfortably early guest; he had made his way in by force.

"It is quite right, Erich," said his mistress, who had now completely recovered her composure. "I will ring when I want breakfast. And, by-the-way, I am not at home in case any one calls."

The old man retired, shrugging his shoulders, and muttering to himself. The moment he closed the door behind him, Julie stepped quickly up to Jansen, who stood in silence at the opposite end of the room, and cordially extended her hand.

"Thank you for coming," she said ; and from her voice it would have been hard for any one to have believed how her heart beat as she uttered these few words. "But sit down. We have much to say to one another."

He bowed slightly, but remained standing where he was, and appeared not to notice that she had offered him her hand.

"Pardon this early visit," he said. "Your note did not reach me last evening. Early this morning, when I went into the studio—"

"Have you any suspicion as to who could have written the letter?" she interrupted, wishing to come to his aid. She had sunk down into a chair, and the dog lay beside her on the carpet, occasionally giving a growl of content as he felt her soft hand on his head.

"I think I know," replied Jansen, after a short pause. "I am certain that some one in this city is dogging all my steps, very likely in the interest of another. What was in that letter is nothing but the pure truth ; and when I went to my studio this morning, I carried a letter in my pocket which I had written overnight, and which tells you almost the same thing. Here it is—if you would like to read it."

She shook her head slightly.

"What for, my dear friend, if it tells me nothing new?"

"Perhaps it may. But you are right ; this piece of paper cannot prove to you the fact I most desire to have proved : that is, that I really wrote this letter last night

before I knew of any other. That is something you can only believe from my personal assurance—and that is the reason of my being here.”

“That is the reason? Oh! my friend, as if I needed such an assurance—as if your hasty departure yesterday had not told me that you did not trust yourself to stay because you—because you had only said what you did in a moment of self-forgetfulness—and yet, believe me, that was a thoughtless word that slipped from my pen, that only an explanation from you could give me back my faith in my own heart. I have never lost that faith. I believe to-day, as yesterday, that my heart knew perfectly well what it was about when it surrendered itself to you.”

“You are an angel from heaven!” he cried, his grief breaking forth; “you seek to defend me even from myself. Yet for me with my hopeless lot to have forced myself into your quiet life, will never cease to be a crime. That is what I said to myself yesterday the moment I left your door. This letter attempted to say the same thing, and informed you also of my firm resolve never to show myself in your sight again. But the strange hand that tugs at the chords of my ruined life, and seeks to tear them asunder, has shattered this resolve. Now I owe you a longer confession than could be written in a letter. For not until you know all about me will you be able to understand that, though it was a sin, it was still a human one, that caused me so to forget myself; and that you need not withdraw your respect from me—though you do your heart—and your hand.”

He was silent again for a moment; she, too, said nothing. She trembled, but she strove hard to appear calm, so that he would go on. How willingly she would have heard her fate in two words—her “to be or not to be!”

What did she care for all the rest? But she felt that he had more to tell her, and she would not interrupt him.

"I hardly know," he continued, "how much our friend Angelica has told you about me. I am a peasant's son, and had to struggle through a hard childhood; and it was a long time before I could bend my stiff peasant's neck so that it fitted without chafing in the yoke of city etiquette. Few men have ever gone such strange ways as I have, always wavering between defiance and humility, audacity and shrinking, as well in my dealings with my fellow-men as in my art. I had a mother of the true old yeoman nobility—which is synonymous with true human nobility—at least in our part of the country. She finally succeeded in making a strong, silent man of my father, who had a streak of the tyrant in him. If she had lived longer, who knows whether I should ever have left her? But soon after her death I prevailed upon my father to let me go to the art-school at Kiel. I did little good there. There was a wild element among the scholars, and I was not the tamest. I always had a great contempt—perhaps because I was ashamed of my peasant's manners—for what we were pleased to call the Philistinism of the worthy citizens. That I, as an artist, was permitted all sorts of liberties that were denied to officials, scholars, and tradespeople, pleased me greatly; and I abused my freedom without stint. But as I moved in a very narrow circle, and seldom came in contact with any high type of humanity, I had no great field in which to display the profligacy of my thoughts and habits. A few wretched *liaisons*, and a number of silly and by no means edifying scrapes, were all that came of it.

"Then I moved to Hamburg. There the same wild life was continued on a somewhat larger scale. You will

readily spare me the details. Now, when I think back on that time, I have to stop and reflect whether it really could have been *I* who wasted his days and nights in such shameful dissipation with such worthless companions. They were my Prince Hal days. 'The wild oats had to be sown.' But now I thank my good star for having led me safely, though by dubious ways, past all that kind of crime and wrong-doing which could not have been covered by this trite saying."

"Well, one evening, when my aching head and my gnawing rage at my own idiocy unfitted me for anything else, I went to the theatre, and saw for the first time an actress who was just entering on an engagement there. The piece was a flat, sensational, social drama, in which she took the part of the noble, generous, young wife, who plays the saving angel to the dissipated husband. It was a moral lecture that appealed directly to my own case; and as the sinner, even in his deepest degradation, seemed an enviable creature as compared with me—for he invariably fell into the arms of his guardian angel—I could not help wishing myself in his place, and so was led to examine that angel very carefully.

"She was certainly well worth looking at. A most charming young person, with a figure, a bearing, and a certain indolent grace in all her movements, such as I had never seen before. In addition to all this a childlike face, with dove-like eyes, and such an innocent, plaintive mouth, that you would have been willing to storm the very heavens just to bring a smile to those pretty lips. When this really appeared at the close of the play (for the young husband reformed), it was all over with me. As I noticed that half the audience—indeed, the entire male part—had gone mad over her, I considered my sudden infatuation

not extraordinary ; especially as I have a way of not being very slow in my feelings of love and hate. You have had experience of that yourself."

He paused for a moment, and gave her a hasty glance. But she did not stir, so breathlessly was she listening to him, her eyes fixed on the head of the dog, who lay quietly sleeping at her side.

"I will spare you any account of the further course of my love affair," he continued. "It is enough that in eight days I gained my case by ardor and flattery : and Lucie was my betrothed.

"The strange manner in which she bore herself in this position ought to have warned me. To my first passionate wooing she had opposed a prudishness and a maidenly reserve such as I had not expected to find in an actress, especially as she let me see plainly enough that she felt anything but indifferent toward me, and that the homage of an artist whose reputation was then in the ascendant was exceptionally flattering to her. But no sooner did I, somewhat taken aback by this severe maidenly reserve, make her a proposal that aimed at nothing less than our marriage and her retirement from the stage, than her tone changed. She began to treat the subject with greater lightness, to utter platitudes against marriages among artists, and in praise of the happiness of liberty ; to tease me with moods, and to attract me again by all kinds of pretty coaxing ; so that my passionate obstinacy was urged higher and higher, until at last I forced her, half against her will, to fix the wedding-day.

"Of course this excited the greatest amazement among my former companions, who could scarcely believe their ears. To those with whom I was most intimate I expatiated on the matter as an exceedingly practical undertak-

ing, as a truly sensible marriage. I should never again find a being who was thus equally removed from Philistinism and evil courses. Besides, one cannot go on sowing wild oats forever ; and it seemed to me that now, when my prospects had begun to seem quite favorable on account of a number of orders I had received, was the most suitable time to settle to a steadier life. This is what I said to my most intimate friends. I said nothing to the others. One of them, our Falstaff, who was the one most concerned at my loss, took me aside one day and asked whether I was really in earnest about this foolish affair. Upon my replying that I was sufficiently in earnest to forbid any contemptuous criticism upon my conduct, even from a good friend, he shrugged his shoulders and excused himself : he had not had the slightest intention of offending me, but he merely wished to call my attention to the fact that this freak of mine might cost me too dearly. Then, when I pressed him further, he remarked that ‘in his opinion there were such things as artificial violets, and that the most genuine thing about this creature was her acting, which, unfortunately, she kept up in real life as well as on the stage. And then followed a short sketch of her adventurous career, which this well-meaning man had collected, not without considerable trouble, from numberless inquiries at the theatres where she had appeared.

“Of course I expressed my appreciation of his kindness in the plainest possible words, broke with him once and for all, and ran off to my betrothed, to whom I excitedly related the whole chronicle of what I had heard about her way of life. The idea had never even entered my head that she would answer me in any other way than with a burst of burning indignation, and I had already

been considering what kind words I should make use of in order to soothe her. But she heard me through without emotion, indeed without even blushing, so that for a moment I was fool enough to say to myself, 'I really believe she is so innocent that she doesn't even understand what I have been telling her.' But when I ceased speaking, she looked me full in the face, quite unabashed and with her most angelic expression, and said: 'This is all a lie, except in one particular. I committed a single wrong when I was a mere child, and that was the reason why I refused to become your wife. Do now as you like; you know what you take when you take me.'

"This confession, which she made with her irresistible melodramatic voice, blinded me completely; and I was more convinced than ever that all the rest of the talk about her deceitfulness and coquetry, and her heartless flirting with foolish young admirers, was a lie. 'No,' I cried, folding her in my arms, 'you shall not find yourself disappointed in me, you shall not find a narrow-minded Philistine, when you thought you were giving yourself up to a free artist's soul. What lies behind you shall cast no shadow over our future. If it is true that you love me, why then—' and here I quoted, slightly changing it to suit the occasion, a verse of poetry that I had read but a short time before and had thought very profound. 'Was *I* a saint before I asked your hand? And yet I was master of my fate, and knew what I did. No, let there be day before us and behind us night, that none may look upon us! Only promise me that in the *future* all your thoughts shall belong to me alone.'

"She sobbed violently in my arms, and made me the fairest promises. I almost believe that at that moment she did indeed mean what she said, for there was a sound

spot in her that had not yet been touched by the worm—a longing for what was pure and good. If this had not been the case, how would it have been possible for me to have continued in my blindness longer than the few weeks of the honey-moon? But she herself seemed so happy in those first months, though we lived quite by ourselves—for I had broken with my old cronies, and had no particular desire to form new acquaintances, whom I could only have found among the Philistine class that I so heartily despised. Then, too, she grew more charming with each day. Once in a while, however, I caught her poring over her prompt-books; and then I told her bluntly, for I could see that her eyes were red with weeping, that she longed to be back behind the foot-lights again, that she missed the applause and grieved because she could not any longer turn the heads of the whole parquet. ‘What can you be thinking of!’ she laughed. ‘In my condition! Why, I should feel like sinking through the deepest trap-door, I should be so ashamed!’ In this way she would drive away my suspicions; and when at length her child was born, I really thought she was so taken up with household joys and cares that she cared for nothing else.

“It is true she was not such a foolish mother as to think her child an angel of beauty. It was a rather plain, unattractive-looking little thing—‘the father over again,’ remarked the women, very justly. But she played the *rôle* of mother with considerable talent; and not until a long time later, when she was sent to the sea-shore to recuperate, did it occur to me that she parted without any particular grief from the laughing and cooing little creature that clung so tightly to her. I staid at home and let her go over to Heligoland by herself, in the charge of

an elderly friend of hers—an actress, but a woman bearing an irreproachable name. I happened to have a few orders that it was necessary to execute just as soon as possible—among others two busts of a rich wharfinger and his wife—and as our household, small as it was, made pretty heavy drains upon my purse, I felt that I ought not to let these chances slip through my fingers. It was our first separation, and I found it hard enough to bear. But, as I had to work hard and also to fill a mother's place toward the child, the first two weeks passed pretty quickly.

“But after that the little one began to give me a great deal of anxiety. Teething set in, there were bad days and worse nights, and the letters I received from my wife—in which she said she was doing admirably and had grown quite young again—did not tend to raise my spirits especially, for it appeared as if nothing were wanting to her happiness, not even her husband and child.

“Heretofore I had had neither disposition nor occasion for jealousy. Suddenly I was to learn what an abyss can be uncovered in a man's soul, into which everything sinks that he has before believed firm and true.

“I had been sitting up late ; the child was very feverish, and toward midnight we had been obliged to call in the doctor. For the first time I thought with bitterness about my wife, who could stay at such a distance and nurse her own health while the little life, that should have been dearer to her than her own, was trembling in the balance. When the child had been quieted a little, so that I could think of taking some rest, it was a long time before I could close my eyes, though as a general thing I could reckon on my peasant's sleep under all circumstances. At last it came, but with it came dreams—

dreams such as I would not have wished to the damned in hell. Always about *her*, in ever-new costumes, playing the old play of pledged and broken faith. Out of the last scene, where, in the very presence of her lover and with the quietest mien in the world, she sought to demonstrate to me her right to transfer her love from one man to another, until I sprang forward with a cry of fury to seize her by the hair—out of this wretched vision of hell I was awakened by the crying of my child; so that I did not take time to wipe the cold sweat from my forehead, but ran into the nursery quite prepared to find Death standing at the head of the little bed. But once again it passed, and in the morning we were both able to get a couple of hours of quiet sleep. Then, at last, I sat down and wrote to my wife just how things stood.

“For some days before, I had not sent her any very encouraging reports. Any other woman would have returned at once, and not have tried to excuse herself on the ground that the water-cure ought not to be interrupted. But she—enough! I must try and control myself when I speak of her. After all the poor creature cannot be blamed because she had no heart, and because my love and passion could not conjure up one within her breast.

“But at the time I wrote in all the roughness and bitterness of my mood, and insisted upon her immediate return. I had almost forgotten the dreams of the night before. But a little later, when I was taking a walk through the city, chance willed it that they should again be recalled to my mind.

“I met a gossiping acquaintance, who had also been passing a few weeks at the island. Heaven knows how it came about that I stopped him and inquired about my

wife. He was very much surprised to hear that she had been there, indeed that she was there still. As in such a small place everybody met everybody else, he could not understand how so beautiful a woman could have escaped his notice. 'To be sure, she has lived in great retirement,' I stammered, and he found this very natural and praiseworthy of a charming young lady, and hoped the cure would be successful, and so left me ; while I stood there like a fool for a full quarter of an hour, staring vacantly at the same flag-stone, and blocking peoples' way as if I had been a stopping-post. Yet she *must* have been there ; letters had daily passed back and forth ; and then, what earthly reason could she have for trying to deceive me in this respect ? But then again : you will readily understand that this incident, trifling as it was in itself, was well calculated to add new fuel to the fever that was raging within me.

"I could not expect her back before the following day. How I survived the intervening hours will always remain a mystery to me. I was incapable of any occupation, of any connected thought or action. I had just sufficient strength and reason left to sit by the side of the poor, feverish child, and apply the ice-bandages, and count the hairs on its forehead.

"Even when night came I would not leave my post. I dreaded to dream. Then came the morning again, and noon and afternoon, and still no news. But at length a drosky drove up, the house-door was opened, the stairs creaked under a light step, I sprang to my feet and rushed to meet her ; just then she entered the door, and my first look in her face strengthened all my horrible suspicions.

"Or no ; it was not her face. I have no right to do this actress an injustice ; she had her face as completely

under control as ever—the innocent violet eyes, the Madonna mouth, the clear forehead—and yet it *was* her face that sent a shudder to my inmost heart. Was that the mien of a mother, hastening to her child that lay at the door of death? of a wife returning, after such anxious weeks of separation, to the husband whom she pretended to have married for love?

“Enough! The fate of our lives was decided in the first few hours. But I was crafty too, and played my *rôle* bravely. That we should refrain from all demonstrations of tenderness, while our child lay in such danger, was so natural—she herself could find nothing wrong in this. But on the following morning, after the night had brought a change for the better and we were able to breathe freely once more, she said to me—and I can see her before me now, as she knelt at a trunk and turned over the gay contents trying to find a comfortable dress to put on, for she had not taken off her clothes during the night—‘Do you know, Hans,’ she said, looking up at me with her dove-like eyes, half petulantly, half pleadingly, ‘do you know that it isn’t at all nice of you not to have paid me a single compliment upon how well I am looking? I left a gallant husband, and find a cold-hearted bear. Come, as a punishment, I will let you kiss this little slipper, that I might have put on the neck of the whole male population of the island if I had wanted to.’

“‘Lucie,’ said I, ‘I want first to make a request of you.’

“‘About what?’ asked she, innocently.

“‘That you will swear to me, by the life of our child, that it is only a devilish delusion, sprung from my jealous dreams, that makes me think you do not come back to me what you were when you went away.’

"I had arranged this sentence word for word, just as one loads with the greatest care a gun with which one wants to take sure aim. And I did not miss the mark. She suddenly flushed purple, bent down her head over the trunk, and fumbled nervously with the heap of sashes and scarfs.

"But she quickly recovered herself.

"*'You have had bad dreams?'* she asked, still quite unabashed. *'What did you dream, then?'*

"And I replied: *'That you had been unfaithful to me. It is nonsense; I know that you can give me back my peace by a single word. But, unless you speak this word—did you understand me, Lucie? By the life of our child, who lies there barely escaped from death—I only want to hear one word. I cannot reproach myself with any neglect of my duty toward you. Do you hear me, Lucie? Why don't you answer me? Can't you bear my look?'*

"She actually succeeded in forcing herself to look at me, but there was not the flash of innocent pride, of offended womanly honor; it was an unsteady, flickering defiance, and the flaring up of a hostile feeling, that I read in her eyes.

"*'I have no answer to such a question,'* said she, with a gesture that carried me back to the time when she was on the stage. *'You insult me, Hans. Let us talk about something else. I will pardon you for the child's sake, and because of the anxiety you have been suffering.'*

"I was still so under her influence that I hesitated for a moment whether to mistrust the voice in my heart, or this serpent look. She had risen, and was standing at the window, her face turned away and her hand before her eyes, such a picture of insulted majesty and innocence

that I already began to curse my heat, and to accuse myself of having done the greatest injustice and wrong that can be done to a helpless woman. But just as I was on the point of going up to her and trying the power of kind words, I heard my dog give a strange sort of a growl and bark, as if he were angry and provoked; for which I could see no reason. He did not like the woman. Either she had never known how, or else she had never thought it worth while, to gain his favor. But heretofore he had seemed to feel the greatest indifference toward her, and I could not understand why her offended speech and bearing should now enrage him. The truth is he was not paying the slightest attention to her, but seemed to have been excited by something that he had dragged out of the pile of things she had taken from her trunk. I called out to him to lie down and keep quiet; he was still in a moment; but, wagging his tail violently, he ran up to me, holding something in his mouth which he laid on my knee. It was a man's glove.

“Can you believe it?—my first feeling at the sight of this evidence was a wild joy and satisfaction. I was suddenly at one with myself again, and the wretched feeling of shame that perhaps after all I had let my suspicious heat get the better of my reason, gave place to an icy calmness.

“‘If you would only turn round,’ I said, ‘perhaps you would speak in a different tone. Without knowing it or wishing it, you have brought me a present from your journey for which I ought to thank you.’

“As she turned round, even she was not actress enough to repress a gesture of terror.

“‘I swear to you—’ she stammered, pale as death.

“‘Very good,’ I said; ‘that is precisely what I have

been asking you to do. But—do you hear?—consider well what you swear and by what you swear it. By the life of the innocent creature lying in that chamber, by that God who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation—’

“‘I don’t know what you mean—I—I have done no wrong and have no need to swear. This glove, Heaven knows—’

“‘Heaven does know!’ I shrieked, my smouldering rage breaking out furiously.

“I reached out my hand toward her; everything reeled before my eyes; I have no further recollection of what I said and did at that moment, except that I was very near seizing her by her long locks, as in my dream, and dragging her across the room and down the stairs, and casting her out into the street. I am sure, however, that I did not touch her, but my looks and words must have been so relentless and unmistakable that she herself found it advisable to leave me. Half an hour later I was alone again with my child.

“That very day I received a letter from her, full of well-turned periods and insidious accusations. I read it without emotion. I was like a well that has been choked forever—nothing can make its water bubble up again. I answered this letter with a single word—‘Swear!’ No second letter came; a last remnant of human feeling, sunk deep in superstition, made it impossible for her to utter a lie that might be revenged upon her child.

“I waited three days. Then I wrote her a note that contained no word of reproach, but simply said that it would be impossible for me to share my life with her longer. I told her I would provide for her as I had done heretofore, under the single condition that she would take

her maiden name again and never make any claim upon the child. When I wrote this—I can't help confessing my foolishness to you—something within me said, 'She will never consent to this condition. She will come and fall at your feet, with a full confession of her guilt, and pray you rather to kill her than to separate her from her child.' Then—what might I not have done then?—it makes me shudder to think of it. I almost believe I should have pardoned her—and been wretched ever after, with my honor wounded and my confidence shaken at the very roots. But I had loved her too dearly for me to become master of my weakness so quickly.

"She spared me the temptation. In a few days her answer came; she refrained from making any explanations, which she knew would never be satisfactory to a person so inclined to be suspicious as I was. Great God! I suspicious—I, whom a lie would have quieted again! She accepted what I had proposed to her, intended to return to the stage—for which she was undoubtedly born—thanked me for all the goodness I had shown her, hoped all would go well with me, and much more—a letter well written, friendly, and icy cold.

"Not a syllable was said about the child!"

CHAPTER II.

HE had thrown himself down on a lounge that stood near the door, and his head sank on his breast. For a long time he remained in this position apparently forgetting where he was, and to whom he had been telling his dreary, melancholy story.

The dog rose up, and, with a singularly wistful expression in his eyes, went to the side of his master, who now roused himself with an effort, and made as though he would take his departure.

But Julie did not change her position, nor look at him, but merely said in her soft voice :

“What must you have suffered !” Then, after a moment’s pause, she went on : “And you have never seen her since ?”

“No. I only waited until the child had recovered sufficiently to bear the journey. Then I broke loose from all that held me there, and came to this city. Here I might be a new man—or so I sometimes imagined when I did not think of the past. Yes, the doctors are right—a change of air will work wonders. Do you suppose it was in the slightest degree hard for me to set up my ‘saint-factory ?’ I merely did it so that I might be safe from all dunning letters, and might send the stipulated and very considerable sum, every quarter, to our intermediary in Hamburg. In this way I freed myself from importunities, and consoled myself with the thought that a man need not scruple as to how he earns money that is going to pay for his own shame. A fortunate man, one who lives openly and uprightly, has a right to give himself up to that noblest of all luxuries, the luxury of sacrificing himself to his convictions. If I had had a wife with a pure and noble soul, then it would have been glorious to have accepted even poverty and want in order to remain true to my ideals, and never to have moved a finger except in the service of true art. But as it was—a broken man, a disgraced life—that very stolidity that helped me to bear my fate alone, dulled my susceptibility to all that was base in my money-getting. It was all one, after all.

“And yet, for all that, the old defiance, the old peasant’s pride was not quite dead in me even now. One day, in the midst of my work, the thought came over me—‘What is she doing now?—who is with her?’ Then I sprang to my feet as if I had been stung by an adder, and immediately sat down and wrote to her that I thought it would be more dignified and better for us both to cut the last wretched bond that held us together, so that she might have full freedom. I added that I would provide for her all the same, if she would only consent to a legal separation. I was not ashamed to humiliate myself so far as to beg her to do this. It seemed to me as if the happiness of my future life depended upon my accomplishing this end.

“She kept me waiting for an answer for more than a fortnight. Then she wrote that she could only yield to my request if I would give up the child to her. Who dictated this answer for her, I do not know. Certainly not her heart.

“Give the child into her hands! I would rather have caught it up like a kitten, and thrown it into the sea! I had found a family here—good, honest people—to whose care I could intrust it, and with whose children it is growing up. I myself have a room under the same roof. When I come home of an evening, I only need to open the door a little to see the little motherless thing asleep in its bed. But on Sunday I either stay at home in the afternoon, or take a drive or a walk with it to some place where I am sure of not meeting any curious acquaintances, who might ask me whose child it is. I pass in the city for unmarried. But, for some time past, I have been led to suspect that I have an enemy who is determined I shall not bear that character any longer. Lucie’s

mother appeared here a year or two ago. Had I known this woman before my marriage, I might perhaps have been warned not to trust those violet eyes. She has some hidden object for being here ; she follows all my movements—I know that she wishes me ill—that letter to you confirms it. But, perhaps, it was better so. The letter that I wrote to you last night, who knows whether I should have had the courage to send it to-day? And yet, every hour longer that I kept you in the dark would have been a reproach to me. And now—”

“I have a great favor to ask of you,” she suddenly interrupted.

“Julie, what could you ask that I would not joyfully—”

“I would love so dearly to see the child. Will you bring it to me? or will you go there with me?”

He took a step toward her ; now, for the first time, he ventured to look her in the face. She rose and went forward to meet him.

“Dear friend,” she said, “I must know this child. No matter how well it may be taken care of where it is, it is and always will be motherless. It can only find a mother again in her who loves the father more than all else, and who would take to her heart all that belongs to him. Do you not see that you must bring the child to me?”

“Julie !” he cried, in a tone that burst from his innermost heart, just as when a dreamer with a loud cry shakes off the nightmare that is so suffocating him. He staggered toward her, and tried to seize her hand ; but she drew back a step, shook her head gently, and said, with a blush :

“Listen patiently to what I am going to say, or else

it will be hard for me to control myself and find the words. The sad story you have just told me has given me a great deal to think of ; I have not yet clearly fixed it in my mind. But one thing is already clear to me : that nothing in your past life can ever separate me from you. On the contrary, I have been continually testing my feeling during your confession, and have found that I love you now even more wholly than I did yesterday, and that I know better *why* I love you, if this is not a senseless thing to say. My heart is old enough to be wise, and to know why it loves any one, though my head is not quite so ready. And so, my dearest friend, I now seriously declare to you, I have not the slightest intention of ceasing to love you because so and so many years ago you made the mistake of believing another human being to be better than she really was. I will go still further : you shall not cease to love me either, unless you made a second mistake yesterday, which I confess would be much more painful to me than that first one."

She did not succeed in uttering these last words, for, overwhelmed with joy, Jansen had seized her in his arms. He held her long in this embrace, until at last she recovered breath enough to beg for her release.

"No, no," she said, as she gently freed herself, "do not do so, dear, or I will take it all back again ; for you and I are not to be spared our time of trial. Sit down here opposite me like a sensible man, and let go my hands and try to understand all that I have to say to you. You see, your sweetheart is no longer young, and much too experienced and worldly not to keep her senses about her, and think for two even at such a time, hard as it may be. I will not retract a word of what I just confessed—that I will not relinquish the happiness of feeling myself

to belong to you, because you are not yet free. I love you all the more dearly for what I now know, for the delicacy with which you have tried to spare her who has so cruelly wounded you ; for the fact that you have not sought, even at the cost of a public trial, to break the bond that holds you together ; for the affection that has grown up within you for your child, so that you do not hesitate to sacrifice your liberty for its sake. Whether this sacrifice is necessary we will consider more fully. But let this be as it may, let human justice come to our aid or not : this I know, that from this time forth I will devote my life to you, that I could no longer belong to myself even if I tried. Everything else seems petty beside it, and there must be some place in the world where we shall find our happiness in one another. But one thing must happen first ; you must learn to know me thoroughly. Do not smile and say needless things that I know beforehand. You really do not know me as I am, or as I know you, because I have seen your art and know your life, and more especially because I, as a woman who has been looking at the world for thirty-one years, know human nature much better than a man like you, who have the additional disadvantage of being an artist, and therefore blinded by a touch of beauty. Do you not see that in ten years I shall be an old woman, no longer like your Eve, and then what would you think of me, unless my inner being was necessary to your life and worthy of your love and constancy ? And for that reason you must resolve to let a barrier remain between us for a whole year yet. You may be sure it has cost me a hard struggle to lay such a condition on myself ; we have already lost so many happy years of youth. It seems cruel that, in addition to all this, we must have a long engagement. But

the more dearly I love you, and wretched as I should be if you did not stand the test, the more bravely I must and will adhere to my resolution. Then, besides, have I not to win your child's heart, so that it will not draw back, as from a stranger, from her whom it is to call mother?"

She gazed in his face with a look of the deepest faith and tenderness, and reached him her hand across the table at which they were both sitting. He grasped it so tightly that she smilingly tried to withdraw it again.

"Perhaps you are right," said he, seriously. "At all events I think you understand all these things far better than I do, for to tell the truth, I am still so stunned with the thought of this happiness, that you could make me consent to anything you asked. Good God! with what a heart I came in that door—a doomed man, a lost wretch—and now, and always—"

He was just on the point of starting up again—the place at her feet which the dog had occupied seemed to have an attraction for him—when they heard old Erich's voice in the front parlor, saying to some one, in its driest tone, that his mistress was not at home for anybody to-day.

"Not even for me?" queried this some one. "I must hear her say so herself before I will believe it."

"Angelica!" cried Julie. "We ought not to shut out this dear creature from our happiness."

She sprang up and hastened out before her friend—to whom any third person was hateful at such a moment—could make any objection.

"Don't be afraid of him!" she cried, leading the astonished Angelica into the room triumphantly. "It is true he is a perfect Berserker, and not a good man to quarrel with. But for that very reason you must take

my part against him. Two staid women of our age ought to have no difficulty in controlling such a violent man. And isn't it your duty to help me out of the trouble into which you got me yourself? Dear Jansen, do not put on such an angry face! Tell this dear, good, astonished friend that we are resolved, in all seriousness, never again to lose sight of one another after having been brought together in so strange a way, thanks to art and to this excellent artist, whom we will not leave without her reward!"

There was nothing left for Jansen but to make the best of the matter, and say a few friendly words to Angelica. But his whole soul was in such commotion that he soon relapsed into a state of absentmindedness. He listened with half an ear to what his beloved was saying to Angelica, who did not sustain her part of the conversation very well, and who uttered none of those bright sayings with which she was generally so ready. That the two women friends should take up their quarters together; that the visits of the *fiancé* should only take place on certain days and in her own presence; that, for the present at least, they would not disclose the great event even to their most intimate friends in "Paradise"—all this and more was discussed, the burden of the conversation falling almost entirely on Julie. A certain lightheartedness had taken possession of her, such as her friend had never seen her show before. She insisted upon Jansen and Angelica taking breakfast with her, and played the part of hostess most charmingly. Jansen followed every movement she made, as if he were attracted by a magnet; and was caught more than once returning the most irrelevant answers.

At last, when he really had to go—it was already past

noon, but no one had taken any heed of the time—Angelica too rose in great haste.

“I will go on ahead,” said she; “lovers don’t go through with their leave-takings quite as quickly as we single people.”

But Julie detained her. She merely gave Jansen her hand to kiss, and closed the door behind him. Then she fell on her friend’s neck and kissed her, her eyes overflowing with tears.

“Forgive me my happiness!” she whispered. “It is so great I am almost afraid of it, as though I had stolen a crown!”

“What a child you are!” said the artist, bending over her and blushing. “I told you how it would be—though really I was not so reckless as you have been. To love this man just as one would any ordinary mortal, to take him to your heart in this sudden fashion—well, I must say, I admire your courage. It is true you are a perfectly charming piece of human nature, from top to toe, and can do things other folks can’t. Now, such miserable institutions as we common people are, mere images of God in *gouache* or water-color—well, we have to be sensible, at all hazards, unless we would bring down ridicule as well as injury upon our heads. *Addio, cara! Iddio ti benedica!*” and with these words she rushed out of the door.

CHAPTER III.

It was close upon midnight when Rosenbusch, with a heavy sigh, shut the little sketch-book in which he had been scribbling verses on the empty leaves between por-

traits of horses' heads and studies of costumes and armor, and proceeded to drink off the last drops of his red Würtemberg wine. For more than three hours he had been sitting in the same place in the corner of a quiet little beer-house, where few of the regular guests were to be found to-day on account of the beautiful weather outside, and where those who were present were fully occupied with their customary drink. It would not be very hard to divine what had led our friend hither. First of all, the certainty of not meeting any one whom he knew. Then, probably, an unconscious attraction in the name. The landlord of this little wine-room bore the name of the first man, and it is probable that one who had just been driven from Paradise felt a strong inclination to go and console himself with another Adam over the common fate of the race. In this object he seemed to have been wonderfully successful, partly because of the innocent power of the red Würtemberger, of which this desperate man had managed to empty four Schoppen; partly because of the soothing influence of the muses.

What Rosenbusch had written in his sketch-book had been a melancholy strain; a sad lament over the misappreciation of the world, its hardhearted realism, its effect upon his own fate, and, finally, over his own desperate love affair.

Any one who knew how to read poems might easily have derived from this one the consolation that the author's life was in no immediate danger from the stunning blows which had fallen upon it. The truth is he belonged to those delicately-strung, romantic souls, who consider it almost a moral duty to suffer continually from some gentle inflammation of the heart or fantasy. But the more chronic their state becomes, the less dangerous it is, as a

general rule. Unfortunately, in the case of our lyric poet, there was another circumstance which tended greatly to increase the unpleasantness of his situation. Though, by temperament, he was little inclined to passionate catastrophes, he felt, on the other hand, a certain abstract craving for action, which made it impossible for him to be content with looking on at life from a distance. A certain lack of physical courage—for he was of a slender, nervous build—made him feel it incumbent on him to exercise so much the more moral boldness, and to carry a fancy, which another would have quickly put aside—for it had not really taken a very strong hold on him—to some romantic end, or to illustrate it by some adventurous enterprise. This love of *dénouements* had generally turned out so badly for him that he might well have been discouraged; his friends told the most comical stories of what he had suffered in this way. But in spite of all this, he had just taken the most audacious step of his life, with the deliberate intention of doing something at the same time chivalrous and practical. He, who barely lived from hand to mouth, had seriously appeared as a suitor in the house of a worthy citizen of the good old Munich type, entirely incapable of taking a joke in such a matter. Why matters had been pushed to such an extreme in this particular case, he himself would have found it hard to say. For a long time the affair had run the usual course; first, stolen glances were interchanged from window to window, across the narrow alley; then came the first tributes of homage in the shape of little notes in verse, surreptitiously delivered, and flowery contributions to the Munich daily paper, the *Latest News*. These effusions were accompanied by much lurking about the streets, which eventually resulted in the formation of the

desired acquaintance, and ended in a bold confession of love under the "dark arches" of the Marienplatz. With all her blushing and laughing, and nods and glances, the dear child had managed to draw the line so skillfully that she appeared to refuse his attentions as little as she appeared to encourage them. She treated the whole matter as a joke, as something to be laughed over, but never for one moment to be regarded in a serious light. That the good-looking, dashing, gallant painter found favor in the eyes of his pretty neighbor could not be exactly denied. She even went so far once as to entreat him to keep up his flute practice diligently. She never fell asleep so comfortably as when he was sending forth some really heart-rending melody. For the rest she knew very well what to expect of artists, and she had no doubt but what he had copied the beautiful poems he had addressed to her from some book or other.

Rosenbusch felt himself rather flattered than hurt by these doubts; but still this did not advance matters at all, and his dramatic instinct for fresh excitement and change of action was almost in danger of lagging a little, when it received an unexpected impulse from another quarter. He discovered a secret that heretofore had been guarded more carefully than his own; this was the hopeless love that his next-door neighbor, Elfinger, entertained for the sister of his sweetheart.

He felt at once that it was incumbent upon his honor for him to do something which should release them both from this state of unmanly submission to their fate, and of base yearning toward the house of a Philistine, and at the same time push the fortunes of his friend. If he himself could once obtain free access to the house in the character of *fiancé* to the worldly daughter, Elfinger

would have no difficulty in becoming more intimate with her spiritually-inclined elder sister, and would undoubtedly be able to overcome those scruples that had heretofore prevented this singular girl from accepting any of his letters, or even from consenting to strike up an acquaintance with him in the open street.

Confident in this belief, he determined upon the desperate step ; and, if he could not muster up sufficient courage, after the miserable termination of his undertaking, to return to his friend with the bad news, let us not think any the worse of his good heart.

Yet we must confess that, as far as he himself was concerned, he regarded this crushing conclusion to the novel as beneficial rather than lamentable. He had done his best, had displayed uncommon courage, and had shown the beautiful being how serious he was in his intentions ; but now he felt that he had a right to rejoice in peace over an honorable defeat that permitted him to go on setting his heart on everything that was lovable and unattainable. When at last he stepped out of the wine-room into the square, where the moonlight shone full upon the five bronze statues standing rigidly in their regular rank and file, a feeling of infinite satisfaction stole over him ; a malicious joy that he could wander here in flesh and blood beneath the changing moon and have as many love affairs as he liked, while these celebrated dignitaries stood on their pedestals unable to move a muscle. He even caught himself beginning to sing in a loud voice ; but a moment after he came to a sudden stop. He felt that it was not at all the proper thing for him to go about bawling merry songs, considering the mournful mood he ought by good rights to be in.

So he composed his feelings, and wended his way

home in a much more subdued manner. But when he reached his street, and saw the lights in Elfinger's windows blinking down at him, his heart quickly sunk into his boots again. He could not bring himself to go up at this dead hour of the night and confess to his friend how badly the affair had turned out. So he turned swiftly upon his heel, and, taking a roundabout way, finally reached his studio, where he knew he could find tolerable sleeping quarters.

The janitor opened his eyes wide when he was knocked up to open the back-door for Herr Rosenbusch. The white mice, too, quickly sprang up from their pleasant dreams of biscuit and Swiss cheese, and rubbed their snouts against the wire-netting in nervous excitement; for they recognized their master. There he stood in the moonlight, paying no attention to them, firmly planted before the battle of Lützen. He gazed at it for a while in silence; then he felt for the place where his beard was usually to be found.

"You are no fool, after all!" he muttered to himself. "If you had never painted anything but that black charger there, rearing because he has received a bullet in his neck— *Basta! Anch' io sono pittore!*"

Then he took his flute out of its case, and marched up and down for a while blowing an *adagio*, in order to dissipate the fumes of the red Würtemberger. At length, when he felt tired enough, he rigged up a bed on the floor out of a Swedish saddle, that he took for a pillow, a saddle-blanket, said to have been used by Count Piccolomini, and a tiger-skin which the moths had eaten until it looked like a variegated geographical chart, but which was popularly supposed to have belonged to Froben, the Master of the Horse. However this might be, it served to make a

softer bed for the tired body of the last of the romantic battle-painters ; and he stretched himself upon it with a sigh, looked out once more on the moonlight night, and then fell into a deep and dreamless sleep, such as is rarely granted to a disappointed lover.

CHAPTER IV.

ELFINGER had been sitting up late into the night awaiting the return of his friend, until at last he was forced to admit that there could be no doubt but what the adventure had not ended very gloriously. He fell asleep with a heavy heart, for his last hopes were now defeated.

The next morning he crept mournfully down to the bank, and left it earlier than usual under some pretext or other. He hoped to find Rosenbusch at home at last. But the little, scantily furnished, untidy chamber of the battle-painter was still vacant.

Could he have done something desperate, left the city or even—?

In great excitement, for he loved his good comrade heartily, he mounted the dark stairs for the second time, after the close of his evening duties at his desk. He found on his little table an unmistakable symbolical sign that his friend was still in the land of the living. A large market-basket stood in the middle, provided with a long paper label such as they put on medicine-bottles ; and on it were written these words :

“A REMEDY FOR BREADLESS ARTISTS.
TO BE TAKEN ACCORDING TO THE NECESSITIES
OF THE CASE.
FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE LEATHER GLOVE.”¹

There was nothing in the basket but the sketch-book, in which the solitary outcast had written his lamentations the night before.

The actor had not yet finished reading the last strophes when the door opened, and Rosenbusch solemnly entered, with such an indescribably mournful expression upon his face that it was impossible to look at him without laughing. As soon as he saw that Elfinger was once more capable of appreciating the humor of the situation, it was easy to perceive that a weight was lifted from his heart. He stepped hastily up to his friend, and, giving him both his hands, cried :

“Drink to the lost, O stranger,
And pray for his poor soul !”

the final words of his own verses.

“But come, brother,” he continued, “let us rise superior to our fate, and although our manly spirit may not forbid us to shed a tear—”

“So it is all over, and there is no more hope ?” interrupted Elfinger, shutting up the sketch-book.

“Over and gone forever ! unless I should change my course in my old age and become a cattle-painter, or should crawl back into the womb so as to be born again

¹ The Germans say “to get the basket,” as we say “to get the mitten.”—*Translator.*

as a pupil of Piloty. Just conceive it, Roscius! Only yesterday, hardly an hour before I paid my visit to papa, this brave Theban had fallen into the hands of a good friend at the art-club, who had stuffed him with a long account of the wonderfully flourishing financial condition of art in our good city of Munich. A flock of sheep, that had just been sold for eight thousand gulden, and the vivisection of a rabbit by some Hungarian or Pole whom that magician Piloty had developed into a celebrated man in six months, and whose pictures are now sold for unheard-of prices before they leave the easel, had given the two Philistines a chance to air their æsthetics, which are as irrefutable as mathematics. Figures show this. The export of painted canvas from this city, which has attained a gigantic height during the last few years, even surpassing the export of tanned leather, could not but impress even Nanny's unpoetical father. I might have carried off the little jewel without the slightest trouble if I could only have shown him a single cow, or some little historical atrocity. But for battles there was 'no demand'—eternal peace lay before us. How much did I make a year out of my old-fashioned art? Well—I lied like a trooper, and mentioned some unheard of sum for a man in my condition. Whereupon the monster laughed: he knew an animal-painter who had made double that amount from a single sheep's-head, in which, to be sure, you could distinctly perceive the quality of the wool by looking at it through a magnifying-glass. It was then that my temperament played me a shabby trick. I could not resist the temptation to make a disrespectful pun¹—one, moreover, that was much too obvious to make it

¹ Of course a play on *Schafskopf* (sheep's-head), the German phrase for a stupid fool.—*Translator*.

worth the while—and after this there was no helping matters. Unfortunately we could distinctly hear a burst of laughter, over my poor joke at papa's expense, proceeding from the adjoining room. The author of it had apparently been unable to withstand her maidenly curiosity, and had been listening to all that had been said. But I—”

He checked himself suddenly. His eyes unconsciously wandered to the windows across the street, and what he saw there caused him to forget the end of his report.

A most charming girl made her appearance behind the window-pane, and two little hands could be seen fastening a little straw-hat firmly on the brown head; then the window was opened and the sky was eagerly scanned, apparently in order to find out whether it threatened rain or promised to be fair. At the window to the left a slim figure could also be discerned, as it shut up some sewing in the drawer of the little work-table, and then threw open the window so that the evening air might benefit the flowers. But while the mischievous eyes of the younger sister, in roving merrily about, lighted on Rosenbusch, who had quickly stepped up to his window, and gave him a stolen glance in passing, the second sister refrained from all such worldly arts and immediately disappeared from the window, after having said something to the younger which the spy opposite could not understand, in spite of the windows being open.

“Elfinger,” cried the painter, “it was a wrong conclusion after all. The affair is not over yet by any means, and I am willing to bet that the chapter we have just reached won't be the most tiresome one in this great sensational romance.”

He quickly dragged his astonished friend, who, in his

despondency, could not understand this sudden change of mood, out of the door and down into the street. They stepped out of the house-door just as the two sisters over opposite crossed the threshold of their home, both modestly veiled, and carrying little black prayer-books in their hands. But, before they turned down the street to the right, a bright smile passed over the face of the younger one, which Rosenbusch noted through her veil and knew well enough how to interpret.

"Let's wait a second," he said. "We'll give them a little start. That little Philistine is a perfect witch! I wonder where she got it from!"

"They seem to be going to church. Is there any open so late as this?"

"You forget that this good city of Munich is called *Monachum monachorum*. If it's too late for vespers, then it's just early enough for a vigil. So now—march! Otherwise they will be round the corner, and we shall lose track of them."

It was still light in the street, but Sunday evening sets in pretty early in Munich, especially on summer days, when a hot air prevails that is provocative of an early thirst. The two slight girlish figures made their way through the throng in the inner town as skillfully as lizards, now disappearing from the gaze of their faithful followers, and now coming into view again. They turned into a rather broad but deserted side-street, in which stood an insignificant little chapel, scarcely to be distinguished from the row of dwelling-houses, though it had the reputation of enjoying the special protection of the Virgin. A slight jutting out of the decorated façade was the only thing which indicated its whereabouts, just as a well-to-do ecclesiastical gentleman going about in the midst of his

flock shows, by the gentle outward curve of his body, that he has dedicated his life to contemplation, and to thanksgiving for all the good gifts of Heaven.

From the low portal of this out-of-the-way little church, which was guarded by a plain wooden door, a dense crowd of worshipers were just streaming forth, mostly old women and shriveled-up old men, and a few early-converted sinners with faded faces and restless looks. No sooner did they come out into the street than most of them gave themselves up to the refreshing enjoyment of fresh air and cheerful conversation—two luxuries which they had been forced to dispense with inside. Only a few wheezing old men crept along alone, counting their beads with their long bony fingers as they went. The pious company were far too much occupied with themselves to pay any attention to the two sisters, who now entered the deserted sanctum. It was dark and gloomy enough within. A gaunt fellow in a white surplice, who figured as sacristan, was sleepily engaged in putting out the candles on the principal altar, with a rod on which was fastened an extinguisher. When this was done, he spread a covering over the altar-cloth. And now the fading daylight found its only entrance through two arched windows, on which the figures of the Virgin and Joseph with the Child stood out in brilliant red and blue. Over opposite, where two red columns of porphyry supported the organ-loft, deep darkness had already settled down, but faintly broken by the little stumps of tapers before which a few tireless suppliants continued to read in their little books, though the regular service had long since come to an end. An iron stand, with prongs and nails with the sharp ends up, also bore a number of large and small wax-candles, which had been planted there by

the devout as a modest offering. A reddish light from this fragrant candelabrum, which stood before one of the side shrines, fell upon the numerous crucifixes and silver votive offerings near the altars, upon the artificial flowers that decorated the reliquaries, and upon the dilapidated finery of the figure of the Madonna standing at the feet of her crucified Son. It had a singularly weird and depressing effect—the soft crackling of the lights, the subdued mumbling from those toothless lips, the sniffing and wheezing of the kneeling old women, and the peculiar smell of the wax-tapers, incense and snuff, which last article seemed to be in constant use to prevent the devotional spirit from falling into a doze.

But all these impressions, which at first almost took away the breath of the two friends, seemed, from long familiarity, to have lost all power over the sisters. After sprinkling themselves with holy-water out of a basin near one of the red columns, they stepped softly up to the candelabrum, and each fastened her little taper to one of the sharp points, carefully lighting it before doing so, and then returned to the columns and knelt down in two of the back pews, one on one side and one on the other of the middle aisle.

Both appeared to be immediately absorbed in devotional exercises, the forehead pressed upon the open prayer-book, the little hands busied with the beads of their rosaries. But they could hardly have had time to repeat a paternoster before the places at their side were occupied by two voluntary participants in their worship. On the footstool to the right, next the startled Fanny, knelt Elfinger, while Rosenbusch had sunk gently down on the stool on the other side, close to his more worldly sweetheart, who appeared not to take the slight-

est notice of him. The muttering, wheezing, snuff-taking old hags, who sat about here and there, evidently took no offense at this symmetrical group, which quietly busied itself with its own affairs ; and only a round, red-faced little priest, who was kneeling before his own taper and reading out of a book, with his spectacles shoved high up on his forehead, seemed to be suddenly disturbed in his perusal. The spectacles quickly slipped down upon his nose, and his little eyes strove earnestly to pierce the dim light that played about the two red columns.

“Are you really in earnest?” whispered Elfinger, bending down close to the ear of his neighbor. “You really want to turn your back upon this beautiful world and bury yourself in a convent? You, so young, so charming, so well fitted to be happy and to make others happy.”

A deep sigh was the only response he received. At the same time she almost imperceptibly hitched her stool about half an inch farther away from the speaker, and buried her delicate little nose still deeper in her prayer-book.

“Fräulein Fanny,” he whispered, after a pause, “what horrible thing have you seen or experienced in the world that has made you already weary of it? Or does the air here in this house of prayer seem to you easier to breathe than the lovely air of heaven outside? And do you think you will find a convent better ventilated than this place, and filled with a better company?”

“*Ave Maria, ora pro nobis, nunc et in hora—*” murmured the girl, making the sign of the cross.

“And do you think I will be put off in this way?” whispered Rosenbusch to his neighbor. “Oh, my adored Fanny, you do not know me! If painting battles does

not exactly make a man fat, it makes him strong, bold as a lion, invincible. You shall see what heroic deeds I will yet accomplish—on condition, of course, that you remain faithful and true to me. Or do you doubt me?”

She was silent for a moment. A quick, mischievous side-glance rested on him for an instant: “Go away!” she whispered, scarcely above her breath. “You are only joking. It was very wrong of you to follow us here. I still have six paternosters to repeat, and it is a positive sin—”

“It’s a sin of your papa, sweet Nanny mine, to shut you up like a nun and let you go nowhere but to church, as if a young creature needed nothing but to be pious. When should one be merry, then, unless it is when one is young? Come, Fräulein Nanny, if your father had not been so angry yesterday, and I were sitting by your side—not here in the dark corner, but in your own house on the sofa—and were whispering all sorts of silly love-talk in your ear, and your sister, who was left to matronize us, should find her presence absolutely necessary in the kitchen, and—”

The round red face in the window-niche assumed a highly displeased expression, for the two heads near the red columns had approached so near together that their hair touched, and the softest whispering sufficed to make itself understood. Over opposite, where the other couple were, a space two spans broad still intervened between the two kneeling figures. But even there not a syllable appeared to be lost.

“I know I have no right to hope for any great happiness,” whispered Elfinger. “I am a poor cripple. If you reply by saying that it is a piece of audacity for me to hope, with my single eye, to find favor in the most beau-

tiful pair of eyes that ever read in a prayer-book, I find it very natural. Yes, you will even do me a favor, Fräulein Fanny, if you will tell me so—if you will confess to me that a man who looks as I do can never win your heart. I would try then to come to my senses—that is to say, to become quite hopeless. Will you do me this favor?”

Deep silence. Nevertheless she hardly seemed inclined to make such a declaration.

“You are cruel!” he continued; “I am neither to live nor die. But of what account am I? If I could believe that *you* would be happy—O Fanny, I would really suppress my own feelings and call the convent a paradise in which you lived and were content. But I shudder to think that you may regret what you have done when it is too late; that then even a life by the side of such an ugly, insignificant, unknown man as I am, who loves you more than himself and would do everything for you, and who finds his whole world in you—”

He raised his voice so loud as he said this that she looked up in affright, and made a beseeching sign for him to calm himself. In doing this, she involuntarily moved a little nearer to him.

“For Heaven’s sake!” she stammered, “what are you doing? Pray—pray leave me. It can never, it must never be!—never, never! A secret, that I dare not tell to any one, not even in the—”

“In the confessional,” she was about to add. Suddenly she started back, in alarm at what she had already said, and bowed her face down upon her book again.

“This miserable, faint-hearted, wretched world of shopkeepers!” raved Rosenbusch, on his stool over opposite. “Can there still be bold and manly deeds? O Nanny!

if it only were as it once was, I would come spurring up to your father's castle some fine night on my gallant charger. You would let down a rope-ladder from the donjon-window, and would swing yourself up behind me on my horse—and away we would go into the wide, wide world! But nowadays—”

“Hm! nowadays we have railroads,” she murmured, slyly.

“Girl!” he cried, in a sepulchral voice, “are you really in earnest? You would—you have the courage? O dearest Nanny of my heart! If I should elope with you, you would love me so dearly that you would follow me to the end of the world—”

She shook her head. There was a sound like a suppressed giggle.

“Nonsense!” she said, “we need only go as far as Pasing. Then papa will steam by us; or we can do as another couple once did. They merely went to the top of the church of St. Peter and sat concealed there with the warden, and their people went searching about all over the country for them, while they sat there and laughed at them all.”

“Nanny, love, you really will—oh, what a heavenly idea! To-morrow—if you are truly in earnest—to-morrow evening at this time—”

This time she actually laughed out loud, but she held her handkerchief before her face.

“Oh, stop!” she said, “I was only joking! It is absurd to talk of such a thing! Mother would worry herself to death, and besides—but we must go; Fanny has risen already.”

She put her book up near her face, so as to pray as quickly as possible. But he, burning with his adven-

turous spirit, and encouraged by the darkness of the place, quickly whispered to her :

“And you will send me away in this fashion? Not a single stolen—oh, Nanny dear, you would be doing a good deed—a kiss, in all honor !”

She seemed to have suddenly become deaf, so motionless did she kneel there, with her eyes tightly closed. At last, however, she made a movement as though she would stand up. In doing so, her little book slipped from the slanting rack and fell between her and her chivalrous neighbor. She stooped down hastily to pick it up, and, as he could not help doing likewise, nothing was more natural than that their faces should approach near enough, there in the darkness, for him to impress a hasty kiss on the girl's round cheek. She did not even seem to be conscious of what had occurred.

“Thank you,” she whispered as she rose up again, holding the book he had officiously handed her. “Good-night—but you mustn't follow us !”

She said this in a tone which made it very doubtful whether she meant it seriously. At the same time she rose from the stool and hurried to her sister, who stood waiting for her, with downcast eyes, near the holy-water basin.

The two slim figures reverently bent the knee before the principal altar, sprinkled themselves again with the holy-water, and left the little church in the same manner as they had come, deeply veiled and carrying their prayer-books before them in their hands.

Five minutes after, Rosenbusch might have been seen stepping out of the porch, arm-in-arm with the actor. The battle-painter threw the only sixpence he had about him into a lame beggar's hat.

“Holy Mother !” he cried, “life is splendid, after all, in spite of leather-glove-makers.”

“Where shall we go ?” asked his gloomy friend, whose spirits had been completely crushed by the “secret” of his sweetheart.

“To the tower of St. Peter’s, noble Roscius ! I must get acquainted with the warden this very evening, and take a look at the arrangement of the place. One can never know what devilish queer adventures one may encounter, when it would be very useful to have such high friends and patrons.”

CHAPTER V.

EARLY on the morning following their nocturnal encounter, Felix sought out the lieutenant ; he could not rest without trying to find out whether it was not an illusion of his senses which made him think he saw Irene’s uncle riding at his friend’s side. Schnetz lived in the top story of a dismal old house whose winding stairway was but dimly illuminated by a faint stream of light proceeding from a dingy skylight covered with dust and cobwebs. A woman, too refined-looking to be a servant, and, on the other hand, too modest in her behavior to be a housekeeper, opened the door for the strange visitor, looked at him in a frightened and confused way, and informed him in a soft, subdued voice that the lieutenant had gone out very early in the morning ; when he would be back she did not know. He sometimes staid away whole days at a time ; this time, besides, he had said

something to her about taking a ride into the mountains. So Felix was forced to restrain his impatience. But he felt quite incapable of going to his work as usual. He lounged about the streets for hours, regardless of the heat and dust. He carefully scanned every horseman whom he met, and every carriage from which he saw a veil waving; and a girl's head, turning about with restless curiosity to see all that was going on, caused his heart to beat until he had convinced himself it was not the dreaded, and yet secretly so longed-for, face—for which he sought thus earnestly only that it might not take him too much by surprise.

On the following day he continued his aimless wanderings, at first on foot, through all the picture galleries, and in the afternoon in a drosky, in which he rattled through the Au suburb, the English Garden, and, finally, the Nymphenburg and the deer park, until his panting horse landed him, toward evening, at one of the suburban theatres; for there was still a bare possibility that the travelers would feel a desire to see the "Pfarrer von Kirchfeld," which happened to be the sensation of the hour.

All these hopes were doomed to disappointment. Half tired out and half angry with himself, he left the theatre at the close of the first act, and strolled back to his lodgings by the most unfrequented streets he could find. There he found a line from Jansen, who had been alarmed at his long absence.

"It is true," he laughed bitterly to himself, "such an old apprentice as I am ought to know the value of his time better than to cut school for two days. What is the good of it all, except to give one tired legs and a heavy head? And, if I really had found her, what then? We

should have stared at one another like total strangers, and hurried out of one another's sight."

He threw himself on the sofa, and mechanically reached out his hand for one of the books that lay upon the table. As he did so he noticed that he had taken up with it a fine red hair, and this recalled his thoughts to the night when he had given up this room to Zenz.

"What a fool I was!" he muttered between his teeth. "If I had not driven the good creature away from me, perhaps I should be in better humor now, and would not have wasted these two days in such a senseless way."

Then he tried very hard to recall the figure of the poor child. But she exercised no more power over him now than she had when she was present in the body. At last sleep took compassion on his troubled soul.

The next morning he resigned himself with no little bitterness to his fate, and betook himself to Jansen's workshop. He hoped that he should be in better mood when once he had a piece of clay between his fingers.

He started back in positive alarm, therefore, when, while crossing one of the large, deserted squares, he saw the very person whom he had yesterday sought so diligently, coming out of a hotel door and advancing straight upon him. The lieutenant wore his usual suit—a close-buttoned green riding-jacket, high top-boots, and a gray hat, with a little feather, slightly tipped toward the left ear. His dry, yellow face, with its black imperial, had a most grim and defiant look, but it was instantly lighted up by a polite smile when he caught sight of his young friend of the "Paradise."

"I missed your visit day before yesterday, and have not been able to return it yet because I have been in service again. An old acquaintance has fallen upon me from

the skies, a Baron N——” (he gave the name of Irene’s uncle). “I got acquainted with this jolly crony some years ago in Algiers, when, just to get a smell of powder, I was fool enough to take the field against *Messieurs les Arabes*, although they had never done me the slightest harm in the world. The baron was trying at the time to become a lion-hunter; but he afterward preferred to offer his homage to the king of the desert from a respectful distance, and to travel back to his peaceful home with a skin bought at a bazaar, and a good store of burnouses and shawls. He was the sensible man of the two. For my part, it was a long time before I could get rid of the ugly remembrance that I had really done my hunting in earnest, and had probably deprived several of those poor devils of the pleasure of protecting their native soil against the French invaders. And now my old tent-fellow comes upon me here like a ghost—though a very portly and jolly one—and drags me about with him for days; in fact, I am coming from his hotel at this very moment.”

Felix involuntarily gave a glance toward the windows of the hotel. It cost him a hard struggle to suppress all signs of his emotion.

“Does your guest live here?” he asked. “You have been visiting him so early?”

“We were going to take a ride. But I found a note from him, in which he informed me that I might take a holiday. His party has been invited by one of its noble relatives to take an excursion of several days, at which I, thank Heaven, should be quite superfluous.”

“His party? Then the baron is—”

“Married? No; but almost worse than that. He has a young niece with him who is really the cause of his having come here at all. A bad story—a broken engage-

ment, great surmising and gossiping about it in the little capital—in short, the health of the Fräulein demanded a change of air, and she insisted upon going off to Italy for a year. My old comrade, who remained a bachelor because he feared the claws of a lioness less than the slipper of a pretty wife—well, he simply jumped from the frying-pan into the fire. This young niece of his rules him with her little finger. The consequence was that the trunks immediately had to be packed for Italy. But, while here, their noble relatives succeeded in frightening them so about the Italian summers and the cholera, that they have decided to wait until the worst of the season is over, spending part of the time here in the city and part in the mountains. You will perceive, my dear friend, what a charming prospect this is for me.”

“Is the young Fräulein so unamiable that your ‘service’ is such a hard task?” Felix remarked, with an attempt at lightness. At the same time he looked abstractedly away from the lieutenant, as if he merely continued the topic from politeness.

“Look here!” continued Schnetz, with his peculiar, dry chuckle. “If you like, I’ll introduce you to the young lady, and resign all my rights. You will then have an opportunity to become acquainted with the sweetness of such service, and will perhaps make out better than I, who certainly have not succeeded in winning my way to favor. This proud little person—provided, by-the-way, with a pair of eyes that are equally well fitted to rule, to be gracious, and to condemn one forever—has unfortunately never felt a strong hand over her. The consequence is, she has a way of always setting up her own wishes on every subject, among others in regard to this unfortunate engagement. She appears to have made

it so hot for the good youth who had the courage to take up with her, that at last he couldn't stand it any longer. It is very probable that she was sorry for this at heart, and so at the present moment she is in a decidedly irritable and discontented mood, and it is dangerous to touch her without gloves. Unfortunately I neglected to use this consideration ; and, as a consequence, we stand on a most charming war-footing toward one another."

He struck his boot impatiently with his riding-whip, put his left arm through his young companion's right, and, striding rapidly forward with his long legs, growled out :

"It's enough to drive a man wild when he sees how God's images are disfigured—whether by saints or devils, it's all the same. Either confined by strait-lacing or by nuns' robes, or else *décolletées* to the very waist. Believe me, my dear fellow, as far as the education of the women of the upper classes is concerned, we are not much farther advanced to-day than we were in the darkest middle ages, when a brothel stood next door to a church. At least, we, down here in our envied South, are not ; though, to be sure, this Northern blood—"

"A North German ?"

"Hum ! North or middle German !—upon that point she is positively fiendish ! In the very first hour of our meeting, this Fräulein asked me what sort of society we had here—of course, the aristocratic society, as it loves to call itself ; for a mere crowd of human beings, without the forms of etiquette, can never be regarded as human society. I replied quietly that the so-called *good* society here was the worst one could possibly wish for, and that it was only in the so-called *bad* society that I had come across a few good comrades here and there, with whom

there was such a thing as living. Whereupon the little princess looked at me as much as to say that she should never have supposed, from my dress—which was anything but suited to the *salon*—that my exclusion from polite society was otherwise than involuntary. But I, pretending not to notice this, proceeded to explain to her at length the reasons which caused me to be disgusted with the *crème* of our city; the strange odor of their *salons*—a mixture of patchouli, incense, and the stable—their very doubtful French, and their undoubtedly worse German; their almost sublime ignorance of all that is generally considered to belong to education; and that *naïve* lack of knowledge in moral matters, which is generally to be found only in convents, and which can only be properly fostered by an ecclesiastical society and sanctioned by sly father confessors. Your nobles in the North, so far as I have known them—well, I needn't tell you about the clay of which they are made. No matter what hard-mouthed hobbies they ride in regard to affairs of church and state, they nevertheless hold fast to *noblesse oblige*; and then, too, you are very likely to find, in the castles of Pomerania and the Mark, the Bible and the hymn-book side by side with Ranke's 'History of the Popes' and Macaulay's 'History of England.' With us, on the other hand—to be sure, though, Paul de Kock and the 'Seeress of Prevorst' are also classics, and do not stand on the 'Index Expurgatorius.' I notice that you are thinking to yourself how much less jolly, and more discontented and bristling, I am to-day than I was that night in 'Paradise.' You see, my good fellow, you got acquainted with me then in one of my holiday humors, that come over me only once a month; and, to-day, you see my old Adam with his every-day face. If no one

else has told you this, to give you due warning about me, I must confess it myself—since I left the service I have really had no occupation but to scoff and grumble. It is true, we live at a time when every honest fellow will have his hands full if he only conscientiously improves every opportunity to do this. But you know this goes very badly with our celebrated South German good-nature; all the worse if the one who scolds happens to be in the right. It is because of this that I have grown old in my lieutenancy; for I could not keep my mouth shut even about our military shortcomings, and at last succeeded in bolting every door to advancement so tightly against me, that I preferred to leave the beaten track of a military career altogether. Wouldn't even the blessed Thersites have been forced to resign if he had served as first lieutenant under the generals Achilles or Diomædes? And yet, those times were far simpler than ours! So, now, I go on grumbling without hinderance, and without caring whether any notice is taken of it or not. The wheat of the Philistines is sown too thick, and thrives too well, for it to be hurt by the few tares that grow among it. Still, it does me some good; in the first place, because it purges me of my gall before it mixes with my blood and attacks my vitals; and then because it makes me more and more hated by good society, and avoided by persons of my own rank. You don't know what a Robinson-Crusoe-like existence I lead; in the midst of the city I am as solitary as Saint Anthony in his cave; yes, even more lonely, for I suffer no temptations. Won't you take a look at my hermitage? Here we are at the door."

They had arrived at the old house with which Felix had already made acquaintance. He felt very little disposition to mount the stairs again. While his companion

had been running on in this odd, bitter way, his mind had been occupied by one single thought. "She is here ! You need only wish it, and you can see her to-morrow ! " Nevertheless, he could not well refuse Schnetz's polite invitation ; and so he followed him up into his fourth-story quarters.

CHAPTER VI.

THE pale, quiet woman opened the door for them, and looked neither at Schnetz nor his companion, but withdrew hastily to a little back-room near the kitchen, without giving any other answer than a slow shake of the head to her master's kind nod and inquiry whether any one had been there. Felix was struck, even more than the first time, by the sad, timid expression of her eyes, which had a noble form and a soft brilliancy, while her features could never have been handsome even in her younger days.

"You must excuse me," said Schnetz, when they had entered his room, where he offered his visitor a cigar—he himself smoked Algerian tobacco out of a short clay-pipe—"for not having introduced you to Madame Thersites. You would not have gained much by it, for the spirits of that good soul are not, unfortunately, the best in the world. She labors under the fixed delusion that she is the great misfortune of my life, because I quitted the service on her account ; since which time I have had hard work to keep her from quitting life itself in some moment of depression. Yes, my dear fellow, there is a little example of the profound sense, wisdom, and morality of our social condition. This excellent woman, who has now borne the

world with me for ten years, comes of a family of country schoolmasters. I became acquainted with her when I was visiting the lord of the manor ; her old father had been pensioned, her mother was dead, and she, the eldest daughter, took entire charge of the household, educated her brothers and sisters, and yet found time enough to do something for herself and perfect her education. Of course she is a Protestant. Well, I began to respect her greatly ; and so one thing followed another, until I discovered that I could not live without her. The fact that I could not give the bonds which a lieutenant must have in order to marry, did not seem to me at the time an insurmountable difficulty. My sweetheart thought just as I did, that we only need wait until her second sister was old enough to take her place in the household. As soon as this was possible, we could live in the city. An old aunt, whose heir I expected to be, had, as she said herself, long had her trunks packed for the journey to the other world, and then I could easily raise the necessary sum ; while the fact that my marriage would be a *més-alliance* especially delighted my heart on account of my family, with whom I had long before broken off all relations.

“But the departure of my aunt was put off from year to year ; and we resolved not to wait till our best days were past, and lived for some four or five years in Christian and true marriage, though it had not received ecclesiastical sanction. Our only trouble was the loss of our four children. At last my aunt betook herself to her last resting-place ; and now, for we were again expecting a child, we made preparations to procure an official recognition of our union, though nothing could make it closer than it was already. But see what sublime sentiments

were all at once expressed by my good comrades!—the whole corps knew our relations to one another in all its uprightness, and knew me besides. The honor of the corps would suffer under it, they said, if I married a ‘person’ who had had children before the official recognition of her marriage. They wouldn’t have found it in the least offensive had I merely continued the old relations. The logic of this *point d’honneur* was incomprehensible to my stupid head, as well as to my wife’s. But while it merely made mine sit all the firmer on my shoulders, so that I preferred to resign rather than to submit, it threw my poor wife’s completely off its balance. We went through the ceremony sadly ; the child, which was soon after brought into the world, died within a few months; and since that time the poor creature has been afflicted with the melancholy delusion that she has the ruin of my life upon her conscience. I have tried a hundred times to make it clear to her that I could have wished for nothing better than to be free from the routine of military service, and devote my life to my studies. There are certain points in military history, and also a few technical problems and controversial questions, concerning which I sometimes have a word or two to say in military periodicals ; and so, when the wretched campaign of ’66 came, in which we had hard work to save the honor of our arms, to say nothing of our having been delightfully fooled by Austria, I thanked the Lord that I was not forced to march with the rest, but had done forever with a trade which can make a man act against his convictions. Since then, we have lived on unmolested, and I devote my spare hours, as you see, to illustrating my prosaic existence according to the best of my ability.”

His eyes wandered over the little room, which cer-

tainly did not seem very cheerful, and had, even on this summer day, a strangely chilling air. It is possible that this impression was caused in part by the peculiar decoration of the walls, that were but sparsely relieved by a few plain articles of furniture, a black leather sofa and a carved, worm-eaten wardrobe. Instead of framed pictures or engravings, wherever there was a vacant spot, and even behind the stove and in the niche of the solitary window, there were the most grotesque *silhouettes* cut out of black paper and pasted on the bare plaster, which had once been painted white. They formed an extraordinary collection of figures, taken from the most different stations of life, most of them exhibited in ridiculous postures appropriate to their respective occupations—pedantic scholars, students, artists, women, ecclesiastics, and soldiers—all as if caught *in flagrante* in their pet weaknesses and sins, and fixed upon the wall, standing revealed in shadowy outline. Yet an artist could not help taking delight in the broad yet spirited strokes with which each figure was portrayed; and it was simply the superabundance of these weird groups that covered the walls, and had already begun to overspread the smoke-stained ceiling, which was calculated to excite feverish dreams in a quiet brain if they were looked at for any length of time.

“You see now why I dragged you up here,” said Schnetz, throwing off his riding-jacket and crossing his lean arms (round which flapped a pair of coarse shirt-sleeves) behind his back. “From my intercourse with artists I have caught vanity enough to mercilessly entice inoffensive people into my den, although the black art which I pursue appears to very few of them to be worth the trouble of toiling up four flights of stairs to examine. Life viewed from the wrong side—the fancies

of a misanthrope—a Thersites album, or rather nigrum—well, am I wrong in thinking that this world of shadows is even less to your taste than an ordinary art exhibition?

“But when you consider the matter more carefully, you will find it has its good side. What is it that is so absolutely lacking in all modern art, and the absence of which is the source of all other defects? Simply this: it no longer respects the *silhouette*! In landscape and *genre*, historical and portrait painting, yes, even in sculpture, you find everywhere a lot of pretty little tricks of execution; delicate shades, tones, and touches; a devilish careful, nervous, and, on the whole, attractive piece of work, but in it all not a single great feature; no strong decoration, no solid construction, the very shadow of which suggests something. Give me a pair of shears and a quire of black paper, and I will cut you out the whole history of art up to the nineteenth century; the Sistine Madonna and Claude Lorraine as well as Teniers and Ruysdael; Phidias and Michael Angelo as well as Bernini; so that every one of them shall make a good showing, the *rococo* period included, which, after all, had something sounder at bottom than our boasted present. Take away from the latter its finical, over-refined tricks of color, and what is left? An incredible poverty of form, a little brilliancy or aspiring ‘idealism,’ and the bare canvas. The same thing might, it seems to me, be justly applied to our literature, and from that to all the other manifestations of our boasted civilization. But I, on the contrary, have from the very first devoted my attention to the essential part, the primary form, and the really determining outlines; and as these, unfortunately, only come out strongly in our sins and weaknesses, I have become a *silhouette* cutter—an art that not only earns no

bread, but even takes out of one's mouth the bread he might otherwise have gained. Naturally, mankind will never forgive one who shows it its dark side, and points out its excrescences and deformities and defects ; for each individual thinks he is just the one all of whose sides the sun should especially light up."

It was fortunate for Felix, in his absent-minded state, that Schnetz was one of those men who, when they once begin upon the great theme of their life, upon their mission or their one idea, take no offense when their hearer leaves them to run on alone, but play upon their single whim in inexhaustible variations. When, after half an hour or so, Felix interrupted Schnetz with the laughing remark that his teacher would scold him if he came to work too late, he found that he himself had not spoken a dozen words ; and yet the lieutenant took leave of him with the remark that he rejoiced to have discovered in him a congenial spirit, and hoped the four flights of stairs would not be so high as to keep him from their acquaintance later over a glass of beer and a tolerable cigar.

CHAPTER VII.

THE weird shadow-pictures and the biting epigrams of his new friend haunted Felix all the way down the four flights. His head was in a whirl with them ; his heart felt a keen sympathy for this extraordinary being. "What a life !" he said to himself. "How much power is rusting and going to decay there in the dark ! And who is to blame for it ?—and I, who knows but what I—"

He pursued his soliloquy no further. As he stepped

into the sunny streets a carriage rolled quickly past, and from it fluttered a silver-gray veil. In a moment all his thoughts were upon Irene again. Of course it could not have been she; not to-day, at all events. But if she should return from her excursion to-morrow and drive by like this—what then? What would she think? That he had followed her and was seeking an opportunity for reconciliation, after she had bidden him go? Anything rather than such a suspicion! Even though he knew that he was not entirely blameless, his pride was too deeply hurt, his honor was too deeply wounded, for him to make any advances or to suffer even the suspicion of doing so. That she was not running after him, and that she had not the slightest idea in what direction he had turned his steps, he did not for a moment doubt. He knew her proud spirit so well, that he only feared one thing, and that was, that upon catching the faintest hint of his being anywhere near her, she would throw aside all her plans and insist upon leaving the city again; indeed, would rather face the Italian summer and all the dangers of sickness, than give rise to the suspicion that she felt she had been too hasty with him and wished the unfortunate letter unwritten.

The simplest and at the same time the most chivalrous way of getting out of the difficulty would have been for him to have gone out of her way himself; but after brief consideration he rejected this plan as altogether impracticable. An uncontrollable love of art was suddenly aroused in his soul—a strong conviction as to his duty toward Jansen and his own future; and it seemed to him so humiliating to have to confide to his friends the reasons which induced him to run away from school again so soon, that he hastily struck into the nearest way to the

studio, as if he felt that there was the place where he would be safest from all vexations and temptations.

Besides, he had a whole day left in which to take serious counsel with himself, to look at the matter from all sides, and to decide what it was best to do.

As he entered the court he saw a carriage standing at the door of the rear house. Although he knew it could not be hers, it gave him a sharp start, and he beckoned to the janitor and asked him who had come to call. "A lady, neither young nor old, with two gentlemen; and they spoke French." It was evidently a matter of no interest to him, and so, without devoting another thought to it, he opened the door of Jansen's studio and went in.

The visitors were standing directly before the Adam and Eve, with their backs to the door, and did not hear him enter. Jansen gave him a nod of welcome, and old Homo rose slowly from his tiger-skin to rub his gray head against Felix's hand. For a moment, therefore, he could examine the three visitors at his leisure. In the youth with the curly black hair he immediately recognized the young Greek he had met in "Paradise." He was pointing to different parts of the work with animated gestures, and seemed to be expressing to the lady his enthusiastic admiration. The latter, holding an eye-glass close to her eyes, stood silent and motionless before the group, to all appearances completely carried away by it. She was dressed with simple elegance, was rather *petite* than tall, and her face, seen as Felix saw it, in very slight profile, was not exactly youthful or of special beauty, but was striking because of the whiteness of the skin and a certain expression of force and intelligence in the slightly-parted lips.

The Slavic type could be recognized at the first glance,

even before she opened her lips, and expressed her admiration to Jansen with that soft modulation which is so peculiar to the Poles and Russians.

The gentleman on her left took advantage of the first pause to put in his word. He was a lean, elderly, carelessly-dressed man, who continually swayed his long body to and fro while speaking, and raised his eyebrows with an odd expression of importance. He, too, spoke with a foreign accent ; but it turned out, in the course of his conversation, that he was a born German, and had merely acquired this touch of Slavic pronunciation by long residence in Russia. He had introduced himself as an art-collector and professor of æsthetics ; and explained that, while making a professional journey to Italy and France, he had, to his great joy and surprise, encountered at the hotel the countess, whom he had known before in Berlin as an ardent art-lover. Although he had never visited Italy, he spoke of its masterpieces of sculpture with the greatest confidence ; nor did he seem to find anything in Jansen's studio for which he had not a formula at his tongue's end.

In the mean while Stephanopulos had turned round and recognized Felix, and had hastened to introduce him to the lady. Her keen, brown eyes rested with evident pleasure upon the stately figure of the young man ; she asked him how long he had enjoyed the good-fortune to be the pupil of such an artist, and wished to see some of his own productions, a favor which Felix politely but firmly refused to grant.

"Do you fully realize," said she, in her deep, mellow voice, "what an enviable being you are ? You unite the aristocracy of blood and talent, and the fact that you have decided in favor of sculpture sets the crown to your

happiness. What is life, what is all other happiness in life, but an endless series of excitements? What are all other arts but oil to the fire, fuel for the passionate soul that yearns to free itself from the trammels of the world, and seeks repose in the ideal, and, instead of repose, finds merely more inspired emotions? I express myself very awkwardly—you must supply what I mean. But, really, now, in regard to sculpture—is it not, if only because of its material, peculiarly suggestive of moderation and repose, even in the liveliest plays of lines and forms? Take, for instance, that Bacchante over there—what person, no matter how light of foot and fond of dancing, feels when he looks at it the time of the music in the tips of his toes, as if he heard a dance played? Even the storm and whirl of the maddest reel is controlled by the law of beauty, much as one conceives of the idea of the unfettered air in the spirit of the Creator of the universe. And then this unutterably grand group of the first human beings! All disquiet and trouble, all the fates that were reserved for mankind, repose here as if in the germ—in the bud. In the presence of this wonderful work, one forgets all petty wishes and weaknesses! But why haven't you finished the head of your Eve, honored master?"

A sudden blush suffused Jansen's face as he replied that he had not quite made up his mind in regard to the type of face. He was, according to his wont, monosyllabic and almost awkward in the presence of this eloquent woman. But it struck Felix that his face did not darken with suppressed disgust, as was usually the case when he received tiresome visitors, but that he preserved the same patient, smiling mien during the wise utterances of the professor and the rambling scintillations of the

lady. They had not met for two days. Felix had no suspicion of what had happened in the mean time that caused his friend's eyes to sparkle with such unwonted mildness and animation.

Meanwhile the countess was engaged in inspecting the statues that stood about the studio. The professor had previously expressed the opinion that the greater the genius of the man the less he was capable of duly estimating his own labors, and that for that reason he ought to have his own works explained to him ; and, in accordance with this sentiment, he now relieved Jansen of the trouble of acting as *cicerone* in his own workshop. The casts of separate limbs in dimensions larger than life seemed to interest the lady, and the beautifully-shaped breast of a young girl afforded the professor an opportunity to launch into a long discourse on the form of the Venus of Milo as compared with that of the Venus of Medici.

Suddenly the lady turned to a little female figure which stood, still in clay, on the modeling-board near the window, and which must have been a work of the last few days ; for even Felix had never seen it before. Although the head was not larger than a child's fist, and the execution was, as yet, only very sketchy, it was easy to see at the first glance that Julie's picture had floated before the eyes of the sculptor. The beautiful figure leaned gently against the back of a simple *fauteuil*, her right arm, from which the sleeve was pushed back, resting on the arm of the chair, her cheek pressed against her hand, while her left arm hung listlessly down so that the long, exquisitely-formed fingers just touched the head of a dog that was sleeping by her side. The eyes were half closed, just as Julie's generally were ; and, quickly as the feat-

ures had been designed, an expression of thoughtful attention, of earnest and loving sympathy, was clearly conveyed in the face.

In this position she had sat before him while he told her his unhappy story. Amid all the remembrances of the past his eyes had been enchained by the charm of the present, and with that strange, independent action of the artistic temperament, that capacity of the senses for observing closely while the soul smarts and bleeds, he had taken in every line of the beloved figure.

Then, when he had returned to his studio, where Felix did not make his appearance that day, and no one else broke his solitude, he had begun, at first with a careless hand, to form from a piece of clay the picture that never left him, until at length he had grown serious over his pastime, and had produced in an incredibly short time the whole charming figure. A spirit of life, a natural grace, breathed through the whole work, and was still further heightened by its diminutive proportions, reminding one of the fairy-tale about the pygmy maiden who was carried about by her happy lover in a casket.

The æsthetic professor took advantage of the occasion to hold forth concerning sitting statues from the time of the Agrippinas down to that of Marie Louise in Parma ; about the importance of portraits in general, and about other profound subjects of like nature. As for Stephanopulos, he was sincerely carried away by the charm of the figure, and expressed his admiration in enthusiastic terms.

The countess remained silent for a considerable time. Enthusiastically as she had expressed herself concerning Jansen's other works, she evidently found it hard to conquer a certain jealousy in regard to this beautiful woman.

"How often did the lady sit to you?" she asked, at length.

He answered, with a peculiar smile, that he had made the sketch from memory.

"Really? Then you are something more than a magician. You not only conjure up spirits, but spirit and body together. To be sure, we know what helping spirit assists artists in their works of magic—a spirit that rules all other men, and is the servant of genius only.—Or don't you believe, professor," said she, turning to her companion, "that Raphael and Titian could conjure up those whom they loved before their imaginations more vividly than they could other mortals?"

The professor delivered a few brilliant remarks about the power of fancy, which the countess received with an absent smile; for she was once more deeply absorbed in contemplation of the statue.

"Does she live here, and is she to be seen?" she said, suddenly interrupting his flow of eloquence.

"I think, madame, you will give yourself useless trouble in trying to make her acquaintance," replied Jansen, dryly. "The lady lives in a very retired way, and I doubt—"

"Very well, very well, I understand; you are miserly with your treasures, and want to keep the most beautiful to yourself. Unfortunately, it is impossible to be angry with anything genius does! Present my compliments to the charming, mysterious original, and tell her—but who is that playing up-stairs?"

At this moment they heard Rosenbusch's flute, which had been playing a light prelude for some time, strike up a grand *bravura* movement with all the power and feeling of which its owner was capable.

Jansen gave Felix a meaning look. Then he told as much about Rosenbusch as was necessary to excite the lady's curiosity. Upon taking leave, she gave the master and his pupil an invitation for that evening.

"You *must* come," she said ; "to be sure, I haven't much to offer you, especially no such beautiful women as you are accustomed to. But we shall have music—you love music, too, don't you ? And, for the rest, you must be contented with what we can do for you. I live in the hotel ; a bird of passage never has a comfortable nest. But only come to Moscow some time ; I own a few good old pictures and some sculptures there. Will you ? We will talk of this again. Well, good-by until this evening. Here is my address, in case you should be as forgetful as geniuses and friends of beautiful women generally are. *Au revoir !*"

She gave Jansen her card and a shake of the hand, bowed cordially to Felix, and left the studio, followed by her two adjutants.

"Our rat-catcher has made a lucky hit again," laughed Jansen, as they heard the strangers going up-stairs ; and immediately afterward the flute stopped in the room above. "When I have visitors, he invariably becomes musical, in order to remind them that there are other people living in the top story. This time I am especially grateful to him. Upon my word, my patience and politeness were put to a hard test."

"You are right ; the professor certainly was a tough morsel," interrupted Felix. "But, as for the lady—although I know enough of her kind not to be deceived—still, for all that, it is a game of the sex that one never fails to follow with interest."

"A charming game !" cried Jansen, and his face dark-

ened. "I would rather see the most stolid Esquimaux or Hottentot standing before my works than one of these highly-cultured, artificially-excited devotees of art, hungry for emotion—seeking in everything nothing but their own gratification, and worrying a really earnest man to death by their conceited coquetry with all that he holds most sacred. There is nothing which will awe them into silence, or even make them forget themselves. Just as they interest themselves in living creatures only so far as they tend to increase their own importance, so all works of art exist for them only so far as they can be made of use in setting off their beloved *ego*. This same woman visited me once before, a good while ago, and I was so rude to her that I hoped I had shaken her off forever. But even rudeness excites these *blasé* women of the world, just as *Pumpnickel* does the palate when one has been eating too much sugar-cake. In reality, she cares as little for sculpture as for anything else ; unless, perhaps, the study of the nude interests her. And she is here in Munich in search of very different things—trying to gain proselytes for the new school of music."

"I can't help thinking you are rather unjust to her. The very fact that she feels a respect for you, and even a sort of secret fear, shows that you interest her. That is one thing I like about these women ; they are strongly attracted by anything that represents power, and is capable of producing something."

"Yes," laughed Jansen, "until this power humbles itself to be a foot-stool for their restless little feet ; then it will be thrown aside. No, my dear fellow, the only reason these comets are not more particular is because they are forced to keep adding to their tails ; I'd be willing to bet that even our harmless little Rosebud will not be

thought too insignificant to be enrolled in her body-guard. But let her do whatever she likes—what difference does it make to us? But where have you been hiding yourself these last few days? and what is the matter with you now? You are staring at the Russian's visiting-card as if your senses had suddenly been spirited away to Siberia!"

"It is nothing," stammered Felix, putting down the card again. He had read the name of the hotel on it; it happened to be the same one in which Irene was stopping. "'Countess Nelida F——;' I assure you I never heard the name before. Are you going to-night?"

"Possibly, unless something should happen to prevent. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me now with what sort of people I mix, since I—"

He hesitated. His eye glanced involuntarily toward the statuette. Then, after a pause, he said:

"Listen: all sorts of things have happened since we last met. Don't you notice any change in me? I thought I must have grown ten years younger."

Felix looked at him searchingly.

"That could make no one happier than it would me, old Dædalus. And, since we are on the subject, it has somewhat depressed me to find—I must out with it—a different man from the friend I left ten years ago. I always thought it must be my fault that made you so much more reserved and distant toward me than you used to be. If you would only be the same old fellow again—but mayn't I know what has brought this about?"

"Not yet," answered the sculptor, seizing the hand Felix held out to him, and pressing it with evident emotion. "I haven't got permission yet, much as the secret burns in my breast. But, take my word for it, my dear

fellow, all will come right now. I tell you miracles and wonders still happen ; a withered staff burgeons and flourishes, and is filled once more with green sap and white blossoms. The winter was a little long, and no wonder that even you felt the cold."

A knock on the door interrupted him. They heard the voice of the battle-painter outside, eagerly demanding admission.

Jansen drew the bolts which, in his disgust, he had fastened behind the æsthetical professor, and let Rosenbusch in.

"Well!" cried he to his friend, "what do you say to this divine creature? Hasn't she been making herself agreeable to you too? A woman of the gods, by my life! How she hits the nail on the head with every word, draws out the most secret thoughts of the soul, so that one has only to keep his ears and mouth open, and always nod an affirmative! There isn't a horseshoe in all my Battle of Lützen about which she didn't show a profound knowledge; and if she remains in Munich any length of time, she says she shall visit me often, so as to watch me at my work. I am on the only true road, she said; art is action, passion, excitement—a battle for life and death, and other things of the sort, which she actually seemed to snatch from my mouth. A devilish smart woman, and her traveling companion also seems to be a first-rate judge of art. Of course you have been invited to the musical *soirée* this evening. She wants me to bring my flute with me; but I sha'n't be such a fool as to expose myself before this northern Semiramis. What are you laughing at?"

"We are only laughing at the rapid progress of this friend of art in discovering what fits the occasion. Down

here she declared that true art was repose. A flight higher and the sight of the Battle of Lützen caused a new light to be thrown on the subject, and she finds that art is nothing but turmoil and excitement. You have effected a speedy conversion, Rosenbusch. If it is only as permanent as speedy ! ”

For once the battle-painter failed to see the humor of the thing.

“All the same,” he said ; “I am devilish anxious to continue this acquaintance. Why shouldn’t a talented woman be many-sided ? So this evening at eight o’clock I will call for you, baron. What a pity that I should have shaved off my beard and cropped my hair just at this time ! I should have been much more imposing with my former romantic head than in this bald, Philistine guise. However, if the spirit is only unshorn and free—and in any case my velvet jacket will carry me through ! ”

CHAPTER VIII.

PUNCTUALLY at eight o’clock Rosenbusch made his appearance at Felix’s lodgings. He was arrayed with a gorgeousness such as he only assumed on the most extraordinary occasions. It is true, picturesque lights played in the folds of his violet velvet jacket, indicative of the extreme age of its material ; but those who knew that this garment, as was authentically proved by the records, was cut from the robe of state worn by an historical Countess of Tilly, regarded it with reverence, especially as it was exceedingly becoming to its present red-cheeked

wearer. About his neck he had wound a spotlessly white cambric necktie, tied in a delicate knot. His white waistcoat was, to be sure, a little yellowed, and his black trousers were a little shiny in places; but when he entered his friend's room with an elastic step, carrying his tall, antiquated cylinder hat under his arm, and swinging a pair of tolerably white kid gloves in one hand, he cut, upon the whole, such an excellent figure that Felix felt called upon to say something flattering concerning his toilet.

"One must maintain the honor of his station, and prove to the world that the tailor ought to learn from the artist, and not the reverse," replied the painter, with great solemnity, stopping before the glass and endeavoring to give a bolder wave to his cropped hair.

"Now you," he continued, "haven't by any means got rid of the baron yet. Take my word for it, clothes really do make the man. One is a very different kind of fellow in his shirt-sleeves or in a blouse, than in one of the elegant, pinched-up monkey-jackets of the latest style. Doesn't every one of us play a *rôle*? Now just ask Elfinger whether the true spirit of the *rôle* doesn't lie in the costume of the actor. I, for example, in a coat that any Tom or Dick could wear, should feel myself so lowered to their level that I shouldn't want to take a brush in my hand. But dressed as I am, even in my company toilet, I can shout *anch'io* as lustily as far greater people. But you show no signs of getting ready. What do you say to making a sensation by coming late?"

Felix had had time to relapse once more into his melancholy mood. He answered that he had had disagreeable news from home, and was in no humor for going into company. Rosenbusch must excuse him; besides, it

would make no difference to the countess whether an unknown beginner—

“What!” cried the battle-painter, “you are going to leave me to go alone to the enchanted garden of this Armida, while all the time I have been counting on you to save me in case of necessity! Jansen is sure to come late in any case, even if he decides to go at all. No, my dear fellow, you know I expend such unheard-of courage on canvas, that not much remains to me for the *salon*. So, back to back, shoulder to shoulder, with a friend and companion-in-arms, or I will crawl into the first violoncello-case I come to, and bring disgrace upon the Paradise Club.”

He forced Felix, who half laughed and half protested, to make his toilet, and then dragged him out with him, holding tightly to his arm even after they were in the street, as though he still feared that he might try to give him the slip. At heart Felix was glad to be forced. He was secretly ashamed of his fear to enter, even on a day when she was absent, the house where his old sweetheart was living; but now all the depression which had weighed upon him ever since he found out she was in the city left him in the company of his merry friend, and the latter's account of his latest adventures as rejected suitor and happy lover put him in the most cheerful humor. He rallied the artist upon his flighty heart, which, instead of dreading the fire like a burned child, wanted to singe itself in this new flame; all of which Rosenbusch received with a quiet sigh.

“The fact is,” he said, “a countess like this is not so very dangerous. It goes without saying, that in all intercourse with her one must respect certain limits when one is a poor fool of a painter who has to let himself be

snubbed even by a glove-maker. But if, on the other hand, a female demon like this should really take it into her head to elope with one of my sort to Italy or Siberia, let us say—well, she will know what she is about ; and in the mean time we can let things go as Heaven wills.”

Amid talk of this sort they had reached the hotel, in the first story of which a row of lighted windows had already shown them where the female autocrat of all the arts was holding her court. Felix pulled his hat down lower over his forehead, and sprang up the stairs so rapidly that Rosenbusch was left behind breathless.

“You are an extraordinary fellow !” he cried, laughing, after he had overtaken him at the top. “It takes a good deal of diplomacy to get you started, but once started, you can’t get there soon enough.”

Felix made no reply, for just then a servant opened a side-door and they entered a spacious *salon*, which resounded with the last notes of one of Chopin’s nocturnes, with which the hostess herself had opened the *soirée*.

A rather mixed company was grouped about the piano, mostly young people with long hair and pale faces, of the music-of-the-future sort ; mingled with these a few diplomatists, officers, journalists, and people without any other profession than that of knowing everybody and being introduced everywhere. The professor of æsthetics advanced to meet the new arrivals with a sort of host-like cordiality, and shook hands with them. He wore an old-fashioned blue dress-coat with gold buttons, a yellow piqué waistcoat, white summer trousers, and a stiff, black cravat, that compelled him to keep his chin perpetually thrown up. Stephanopulos emerged from the crowd of enthusiastic courtiers in order to welcome the guests, which he too did as if he felt himself quite at home.

But now the dense circle divided, and the countess herself swept up to the new-comers.

She had made an exceedingly becoming toilet—a dark dress of light material, that left bare her shoulders, which were still youthful in appearance; and a Venetian point-lace veil, thrown with studied carelessness about her head, and fastened on one side by a fresh, dark-red rose. The dead white of her cheeks looked more blooming than usual in the warm light of the candles, and her keen, piercing eyes and white teeth vied with one another in brilliancy.

“I am so glad you have kept your word,” she exclaimed to the young men, giving one of her soft little hands to each of them. “I hope, too, your talented friend and master will also find his way here; and you shall not regret having come. To be sure, I told you beforehand you must be contented with what your ears would let you enjoy. Still, your eyes sha’n’t go away quite unsatisfied. Come, I will show you something beautiful.”

She took Felix’s arm, and, talking rapidly all the time, led him to the other end of the *salon*. In a corner, on a semicircular sofa, sat several mothers and duennas, and in the chairs on either side perhaps a half dozen young girls, all belonging to the stage or the music-school, engaged in earnest conversation with some young musicians about the latest opera and the last concert. A little to one side of them a group of elderly gentlemen could be seen gathered about a slight, youthful figure, who sat near a little flower-stand, and who appeared to be listening in rather an absent way to a white-haired little man, who was giving a long disquisition on Bach’s *Passion-Music*. Her back was turned toward the side from which the countess ap-

proached with Felix. Now, upon hearing the hostess's voice, she turned with much dignity.

"Allow me, *ma toute belle*, to introduce to you Baron von Weiblingen and Herr Rosenbusch," said the countess. "The gentlemen are artists, dear Irene; Herr Rosenbusch is a painter and musician.—You have brought your flute, haven't you?"

The painter exhausted himself in assurances of his inability to produce his sounds of Nature, as he called them, for any ears but his own; but the countess had already turned to Felix again.

"Did I say too much?" she whispered, loud enough for the Fräulein to hear her. "Isn't she charming? But your silence says enough. Happy youth! For a woman's ears there is no sweeter music than such silence, when she herself is the cause of it. I leave you to your enchantment; *bonne chance!*"

She tapped his arm lightly with her black fan, nodded slyly to the beautiful girl, and disappeared once more in the crowd about the piano.

The old gentleman, a musical amateur of the old school whom the countess hoped to convert to the new movement, had withdrawn upon the approach of the young men. Rosenbusch took advantage of the moment to make his bows as gracefully as possible, and to open the conversation by asking how the gracious Fräulein liked Munich. Then, upon turning round to give Felix a chance to say something, he discovered to his great surprise that the latter had withdrawn into one of the window niches, from which he vanished a few minutes after. "What devil has got into our young baron?" thought Rosenbusch. It seemed to him out of all propriety to abruptly turn one's back on a charming young lady.

However, he determined to take advantage of this opportunity to show himself in a still more favorable light, for the Fräulein pleased him.

She was very simply dressed, which fact, however, only served to contrast her advantageously with the others, with their silks and showy ornaments. The excursion that was to have lasted several days had been shortened, for the old countess had been seized with an attack of neuralgia, and Irene had scarcely reached home when she was taken possession of by her fellow-lodger for this, as the latter had assured her, entirely improvised *soirée*, for which there was no need to make any great toilet. Her uncle had fled to a gentlemen's club. It was impossible for her to refuse the invitation.

In truth, it was a matter of perfect indifference to her into what company she went. What did she care for any strange faces since the one which was dearest to her had become a stranger? And she had not had the faintest suspicion that she should meet him here.

And now she stood opposite him, and the only look that was exchanged between them showed her that he had come into her presence not less unexpectedly.

A violin concerto, which, to Rosenbusch's great disgust, interrupted him in an eloquent description of the pleasant summer weather in the Bavarian mountains, gave her time to collect her thoughts and to recover herself so far, at least, as not to betray by her manner the emotions that were at strife within her. But what would come next—what she ought to do—was no clearer to her now, when the last tones of the violins were dying away, than in the first few minutes.

"My friend the baron has suddenly disappeared," Rosenbusch now began again. "You must have got a

curious impression of him ; for, upon my word, he stood before you like a painted Turk, as they say here in Munich. I'll eat my head if I can understand why he suddenly became such a stick. He is generally a devilish jolly fellow, and not at all bashful in the presence of ladies."

"He is—your friend?" she asked, in an almost inaudible voice.

"We have known each other for several weeks, and you know, until one has eaten salt with a man—in the mean time, I imagine I think more of him than he does of your humble servant."

"Your friend—is also an artist?"

"Most certainly, Fräulein. He has devoted himself to sculpture under the instruction of his old friend, the celebrated Jansen. How he suddenly came to do it, no one knows. Don't you, too, think he looks more like a cavalier? At all events there is something so romantic, interesting, and Lord Byronish about him that I should not wonder at all if he found tremendous favor with the women. I beg pardon, if I have expressed myself too freely."

He grew red and plucked at his cuffs. She appeared to take no offense at his forcible style, but merely asked again, in the most indifferent tone :

"You think he has no talent?"

"How much talent he has, God only knows," replied his friend candidly. "But one thing is certain, a gigantic courage and a devilish deal of perseverance are required of one who ventures to take up with sculpture nowadays. You wouldn't believe, Fräulein, how difficult it is—in this profession of all others—to find the means with which to mount to the source, in this strait-laced

civilization of ours, with its conventional prejudices. The days when three goddesses did not think it improper to get a certificate of their beauty from a royal goatherd—I beg a thousand pardons, I always do wax warm when I think of our wretched art-condition, and then I blurt out whatever comes into my head. This much is certain: if my friend has allowed himself to be induced merely by his love of beauty to become an artist, instead of living on his estates, he will find he has reckoned without his host even here in Munich. There are charming girls here, to be sure;—seen on the street as they sweep by in their coquettish costumes, with their little hats and chignons, one might almost be tempted to sell one’s soul to the devil out of pure delight—but when one comes to examine them by a stronger light—”

The Fräulein all at once seemed to discover that her presence was imperatively required opposite, where the music pupils were sitting. She rose hastily, bowed coldly to the astonished artist, and approached one of the young ladies with the question whether she too did not find it very warm.

Rosenbusch gazed upon her with open mouth. A suspicion dawned in his innocent brain that perhaps his conversation had appeared rather too free-and-easy to this young lady. He could not understand this, and laid it to the score of her North German education. He had talked in a similar way with his countrywomen at balls, without arousing any special displeasure. Now he slunk pensively away from the flower-stand, just as a promising amateur began to perform one of Bach’s preludes. Slipping quietly along, and keeping close to the wall, he succeeded in reaching the adjoining room, which was dimly lighted, without attracting attention. A lady’s-maid had been

making tea there. The national samovar was still singing on the little table, as though secretly accompanying the playing outside. But in the doorway stood Felix, his gaze, piercing through all the crowd and confusion, fixed upon one particular spot.

He started as the battle-painter's hand was laid softly on his shoulder, and scowled angrily. Rosenbusch thought he did not wish to be disturbed while listening to the music, and kept as still as a mouse as long as the prelude lasted. He himself did not care for Bach. He was, as he expressed it, too "cyclopean" for him. He preferred something melting or merry. So he spent the time in looking about the room, and was astonished to see on an easel near the window, in a sufficiently good light to attract attention, that cartoon of the Bride of Corinth which had brought so little honor to Stephanopulos in "Paradise." The burned corner had not yet been repaired, so that the singular picture made a still more weird impression among its elegant surroundings.

How came it here? Who could have brought it to the countess? Could it be that the young sinner himself had lent a helping hand in getting it for her? His name stood in the corner that had been spared by the fire. It was possible that the honest finder, whom Rosenbusch caught *in flagranti* that night in the "Paradise" garden, had returned it to the artist; that the countess had seen it in his studio, and thought that it would be piquant to exhibit a drawing in her house which had been condemned by the male critics on account of its lack of modesty. Oh, these countesses!—these Russians!

The door leading to a third room was also standing open—to no less a sanctum than the sleeping-chamber of the lady of the house. A hanging-lamp was sus-

pended within, whose light streamed through a rose-colored shade, casting its dreamy rays upon the furniture, and upon the bed hung with embroidered muslin. Near the bed, in an arm-chair, a woman's figure reclined, motionless, so that it could only be discerned with difficulty by a person outside. But Rosenbusch, who was to-day in one of his reckless moods, had already advanced several steps into the sanctum, when he suddenly saw two piercing eyes fixed upon him. He felt as if he had encountered the glowing eyes of a cat in the dark. Confusedly stammering an apology, he bowed to the silent unknown, and hastily beat a retreat into the front room.

In the mean while the playing had come to an end, and the *salon* resounded once more with a confusion of voices in all tongues and dialects ; but still Felix stood there, solitary and unapproachable, as if no one among all who surrounded him knew how to speak his language.

"You don't seem inclined to be particularly gallant," he now heard the cheerful voice of the battle-painter remark ; "or was it merely because you didn't want to cut me out that you refrained from engaging in any further conversation with that splendid Fräulein ? If you had looked closer at her, you would hardly have been capable of such rather insulting magnanimity toward my poor self. A perfectly splendid girl, I assure you ; very exclusive, intellectual and amiable ; and without wanting to flatter myself, I really believe I didn't give her a bad impression of the Munich artists. If I were not so wholly engaged already— But, by-the-way, have you seen what is standing over there, on the easel ? That Stephanopoulos !—just look at him over there, half sprawling over the piano—how he follows the countess with his eyes, all the

while, with a face like an *Ecce Homo* of Mount Athos! A devilish queer kind of fellow!"

"Did she inquire about me?" interrupted Felix, suddenly starting out of his brooding. He passed his hand over his forehead, on which the cold perspiration had started, and drew a long breath. Just at that moment Irene's slender figure glided out of the *salon* in spite of the countess's earnest attempts to detain her.

"Inquire after you?" repeated the artist. "Of course she did. Such a dumb cavalier, who immediately vanishes into obscurity, couldn't help exciting a woman's curiosity."

"And what—what did you say about me?" eagerly inquired Felix.

"I excused you as well as I could, saying that you were generally much more gallant toward ladies."

"Thank you. You are really very kind, Rosenbusch. And she—what did she say to that?"

"Why, what could she say? She didn't appear to feel in the least offended. Very likely she thought her beauty had rather struck you dumb—no woman is offended at that. Don't tell me I don't understand women! And then I talked to her about sculpture— But, upon my word, here comes Jansen. I must go and say good-evening to him."

CHAPTER IX.

It was late when Jansen arrived. He had, as usual, been spending the evening with Julie; and had then escorted Angelica home, who complained afresh each time that she was compelled to be a restraint upon two lovers.

But Julie insisted upon being "matronized" by her during the year of probation, and so she submitted, and knew how to conduct herself so sensibly that the very fact of her presence gave the peculiar charm of suppressed emotion to these happy hours. The after-glow of it still shone upon Jansen's face as he entered the *salon*. A sudden stillness ensued ; all looked at him ; but he seemed hardly to see any one but his hostess, whom he greeted with a shake of the hand. She received him with studied cordiality, immediately took exclusive possession of him, and merely chided him for arriving so late by an allusion to older and higher duties which had a prior claim upon him.

"Now don't deny it," she said, smiling. "It cost you a heroic struggle to tear yourself away at all. It is true a man seldom finds it at all difficult to leave one woman in order to go to another ; but when he is forced to leave a beauty in the lurch, in order to pay a little attention to an old woman, one cannot estimate the sacrifice too highly."

"You are mistaken, countess," he laughingly replied. "I have been forced to tear myself away, not from *one* but from two elderly women, as they are fond of calling themselves—with just as little reason and just as little seriousness as when you, countess, count yourself among that class. But, if it had really cost me a sacrifice, you would have deserved it of me. I know how ungratefully I conducted myself toward you in former years. Yet you haven't treasured it up against me."

"Unfortunately there are men with whom one cannot be offended, no matter what they do. *Ils le savent et ils en abusent*— But what is that?"

She suddenly broke off. Her sharp eye had seen that

one of the young ladies at the opposite end of the room had become faint, and that the elder ones were busied over her. In a second she was at her side, noiselessly and swiftly doing what was necessary. The insensible girl was borne into the sleeping-chamber, and soon came to herself again. When the countess returned, she said, in passing, to Jansen :

“The poor child ! Think of practising nine hours daily, and eating nothing all the while ! What existences some people do lead !” Then to the others : “The Fräulein feels better already. The excessive heat was the cause of her illness. Perhaps if we should turn down the gas just for a little while, the temperature would be somewhat more bearable.”

Several of the young people hastened to execute this hint. When the gas-lights were extinguished, the candles on the piano and a lamp on the mantel over the fireplace gave only a subdued light, so the clear night sky, with its moon and stars, shed its lustre through the wide-opened windows. In this twilight, every one seemed to feel happy and at ease. A young person, who had previously been entreated to sing in vain, now mustered up sufficient courage, and her sweet, sympathetic contralto voice sounded charmingly in the breathless stillness. Jansen had seated himself in a corner of the sofa in the adjoining room ; it did him good to sit there in the dim light, with half-closed eyes, watching the play of the shadows as they passed before him, drinking in the soft tones and thinking all the while upon his happiness. He spoke with no one. Rosenbusch had at first taken a seat by his side ; but as he had received only monosyllabic answers, he had soon withdrawn again. Felix had disappeared without taking leave ; he could not longer suppress all that he

felt. And now the scene in the *salon* grew livelier and more fantastic. No one thought any longer of playing an entire piece of music. The instrument merely served to illustrate this or that assertion, as it came up in the course of the confused conversation; now a few chords were struck, now the hoarse voice of some composer hummed an air in order to explain some passage; the younger guests had separated into little groups, and were apparently engaged in other conversation than that relating to art. In the midst of all was heard from time to time the high, thin voice of the professor, who was continually in search of new victims for his eloquence, and button-holed now one person and now another. This intellectual exertion exhausted him all the less from the fact that he consumed an incredible quantity of the refreshments which were handed about. After having emptied a whole basket of cakes, he devoted himself persistently to the ices, and, finally, when, toward midnight, the champagne was brought in, he seized a whole bottle out of the waiter's hands and placed it with his glass in a little niche behind a pillar. As he did so the countess honored him with a cold, almost contemptuous glance, and her lips curled slightly. The expression enhanced the beauty of her face exceedingly. Then, too, the dim light that now prevailed in the room lent her a strange charm. She looked very much younger, and her eyes flashed sparks that were still capable of kindling fire. Stephanopulos devoured her with his eyes, and was continually seeking a chance to approach her. But she always passed without noticing him; nor did she sit down by Jansen again. It was easy to see that her mind was fixed upon something which took her thoughts away from all that was going on about her.

As it struck midnight, it so chanced that there was a

momentary hush in the conversation. The æsthetical professor advanced into the middle of the *salon*, holding a full glass in his hand, and said :

“Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to propose a toast to our honored mistress, in whose name we are here assembled. I do not mean by this the gracious lady, so sincerely honored by us all, whose guests we are. I have praised her too often not to be willing to resign, for once, to her younger guests this privilege of an old friend. My toast is offered to a mistress even greater than she—to the sublime art of Music, the art of arts, whose supremacy is becoming more and more acknowledged and exalted, without envy by her sisters. May she, the mightiest of all the powers which move the world—thrice glorious and thrice holy Music—live, flourish, and prevail to the end of time !”

Enthusiastic applause followed these words, but even the clinking of the glasses, and the shouts of the different voices, were drowned by a loud flourish which a young musician improvised upon the piano. The professor, who had emptied his bumper at a draught and instantly filled it again, now stepped, with a complacent smile, into the cabinet where Jansen sat, thoughtfully holding his half-filled glass, from which he had scarcely sipped, as if he were counting the rising pearls within it.

“My honored master,” he heard a voice say at his side, “we have not yet touched glasses with one another.”

He quietly looked up at the speaker.

“Do you care very much to have your resolution passed by a strictly unanimous vote ?”

“My resolution ?”

“I mean your exaltation of music above all other arts.

If it was merely a polite phrase to catch the applause of the musicians and the devotees of music, I have nothing to say against it. It is always expedient to howl with the wolves. But in case you expressed your real opinion, and ask me now, on my conscience and between ourselves, whether I share it, you must permit me to draw back my glass in silence, and, if I drink, to think my own thoughts in so doing."

"Do what you can't help doing, *carissimo!*" replied the professor, with a thoughtful nod of the head. "I know very well that you worship other gods, and only esteem you the more for having the true artist's courage to be one-sided. To your health!"

Jansen held his glass in the same position, and did not seem in the least inclined to approach it to that of the professor.

"I am very sorry to sink in your estimation," he said, "but I am really not quite so one-sided as you think. I not only love music, but it is fairly necessary to my existence; and if I am deprived of it for any length of time, my spirit is as ill as my body would be if it were forced to go without its bath."

"A strange comparison!"

"And yet, perhaps, it is more appropriate than it would seem at first. Doesn't a bath stimulate and excite, calm, or quicken the blood, wash away the grime of everyday life from the limbs, and soothe all manner of pain? But it stills neither hunger nor thirst, and he who bathes too often feels his nervous strength relaxed, his blood over-excited, and his organs toned down to a voluptuous languor. Isn't it just so with music? It is possible our thanks are due to her alone that mankind has gradually lost its bestiality, and grown nearer the likeness of God.

But this is equally certain, that men who now carry this enjoyment to excess sink gradually into a vegetating dream-life, and that if a time should come when music should really be exalted as the highest art, the highest problems of humanity would remain unsolved, and the very marrow of mankind would be forceless and feeble.—I know well,” he continued, without noticing that the people in the *salon* were listening to his monologue, and that groups of listeners had approached the door—“I know well that these are heresies which one cannot utter in certain circles without being stoned a little. Nor would I care to discuss the question with a musician, for he would scarcely understand what I really mean. The effect of this art ‘of thinking in tones’ is gradually to dissolve all that is solid in the brain into a softened mass, and only the great, truly creative talents can preserve the capacity and disposition for other intellectual interests. That the highest masters of every art stand on an equality with one another, I need not say. As to the others, the expression which some one used in regard to lyric poets may be justly used toward them—‘They are like geese whose livers have been fattened; excellent livers, but sick geese.’ How can the balance of the intellectual powers be preserved, when any one sits nine hours a day at an instrument and continually practises the same exercises? And for that reason I should be careful how I tried to convince a musician of the error of his fanaticism. But to you, who are an æsthetic by profession—”

He chanced to let his eyes wander toward the door, and broke off suddenly. He noticed now, for the first time, before what an audience he had been speaking. The professor observed his surprise, and grinned maliciously.

“You are talking to your own destruction, my dear

sir," he said, raising his voice. "You might just as well declare in a mosque that Allah was not Allah, and Mohammed was not his prophet, as to assert to this crowd of enthusiastic youths that there is anything more divine than music, or that devotion to it, its service and its cultivation, could ever be pushed too far. Entrench yourself behind your blocks of marble, so that we may grant you peace on favorable terms. What would you say if some one declared that whoever uses his mallet nine hours of the day must, in the course of time, lose his sense of hearing and sight, that his intellectual power would finally become deadened and petrified, and that his soul would get to be as dusty and muddy as the blouse he wears when he hammers his stones?"

A unanimous shout of bravos arose from the group standing nearest him, and a murmur of satisfaction ran through the *salon*.

The countess, who now for the first time became aware of the dialogue, was seen hastily approaching, with the intention of averting the threatened storm by a timely word. But Jansen had already risen to his feet, and stood confronting the professor with the most unruffled composure.

"What would I say?" he cried, loud enough to be understood by all. "I would say that in every art there are artists and mechanics, and that the latter know as little of the god whom they serve as the sexton who sweeps out the church and hands about the contribution-box. Of all the arts there is but one which does not know the dust of the workshop, that has no underlings and assistants, or, at the worst, merely charlatans who fancy themselves masters; and even these know nothing of that kind of mechanical readiness which murders the

soul and deadens thought. For that reason it is the highest and most divine of the arts, before which the others bow, and which they ought to worship as their mistress and goddess. To you, who are in the habit of lecturing upon æsthetics, I should be ashamed to explain myself more fully by saying that I refer to poetry, were it not that in your toast you offered an insult to the majesty of this, the highest muse, which I can only excuse upon the supposition that you have strayed from the temple of the true divinity, and wandered by mistake into a mosque."

With these words he raised his glass, held it before the flame of the lamp and slowly drank it off. A death-like silence followed; the professor, who was apparently on the point of making a rather irritating reply, was restrained by a meaning look from the countess. She herself had looked at the sculptor while he spoke, with a peculiar, searching, flashing look, and merely threatened him playfully with her finger as he now advanced toward her as if to take leave.

"Stay," she whispered to him, "I have a word to speak with you."

Then she turned to the others, and invited them to be seated again and not to think of breaking up so soon. But her most cordial words and demeanor could not banish a certain uncomfortable feeling that had taken possession of the company. No one could be induced to take a place at the piano, and a court musician, who still had a violin sonata *in petto*, shut up his instrument-case with conspicuous noise and took his leave of the countess, bestowing upon Jansen as he passed a look full of meaning. The others followed his example, and, finally, even the professor, who took his defeat most easily, entered

upon his retreat after addressing a few jesting remarks to his opponent. Rosenbusch, who would probably otherwise have waited for Jansen, had offered his services in escorting home the young Fräulein who had fainted earlier in the evening.

The artist and the countess now stood alone confronting one another, in the dimly-lighted room. From the street below they could hear the departing guests as they went away, laughing, talking, and singing.

"I beg for a mild punishment, countess," began Jansen, smiling. "Of course you have only detained me in order to exact a penance in the absence of witnesses. I thank you for this kind intention, although, to be honest, I rather favor a public execution if the head really must come off!"

"You are very, very wicked!" she answered, slowly shaking her head as if she were deeply in earnest in what she said. "You fear neither God nor man, least of all that which seems to many the most terrible—the anger of a woman. And, for that reason, I shall not succeed in punishing you for your sins as you have deserved."

"No," he said. "I submit voluntarily to any penance you may put upon me. How I wish that by so doing I could rid myself of my old fault of thinking aloud without first looking around to see who may be listening!"

She walked up and down the room with folded arms, gazing thoughtfully before her.

"Why should we disguise ourselves?" she said, after a pause. "It is not worth the trouble to deceive the thoughtless masses, and we cannot fool the wise few. Let us drop our masks, dear friend. I think exactly as you do, only perhaps I feel it even more keenly because I am a woman. For me, too, music is merely a bath. But

I enjoy it more passionately because a woman, who is much more restricted than you men, is more grateful for every opportunity to cast off all her chains and fetters, and plunge her soul in a great excited and exciting element. To me such an element is music; of course not all music—not that shallow kind that merely bubbles and murmurs pleasantly, yet scarcely rises to my knees, but that fathomless music whose billows break over my head. To me Sebastian Bach is like a shoreless sea, ‘and it is sweet to plunge into its depths.’ But do not let us talk of the petty souls, the bunglers and the underlings! With you great men—you yourself have said as much—does the material make such a great difference? When you see a work of Phidias, does not your whole being sink as if into divinely cool waters? And that is the main thing in the end. The few moments in life that satisfy our innermost desires are, after all, those only in which we almost believe we are dying. Enjoyment of art, enthusiasm, a great deed, a passion—in the main they all have the same ending. Or do not you agree, dear friend?”

He indicated his assent by a gesture, though he had only caught a few stray words. This woman interested him so little that his thoughts, even when he was at her side, secretly flew away to her whose image filled his heart.

She took his silence as a sign that she had made a deep impression upon him.

“You see,” she continued, “it is a satisfaction to me to tell you this. It is so seldom one finds people capable of comprehending one, and from whom one need have no secrets. It is a privilege of all sovereign natures that they dare to confess all to one another—the highest as

well as the lowest thoughts—for, even when we confess our weakness, we are ennobled by the boldness and daring with which we do it. Oh, my dear friend! if you knew how hard a woman has to struggle to attain that freedom which you men claim as a birthright! For how long a time do we throw away the best years of our life because of false shame, and a thousand other considerations! It is only since I acknowledged it as a moral duty toward my own nature to possess myself of anything toward which I felt drawn, to dare anything which was not beyond my powers, to say anything for which I could find a sympathetic listener—it is only since that time that I can say I have learned to respect myself. But I forget; it does not follow that these confessions interest you, no matter how much sympathy you may feel for them. I am, doubtless, not the first woman who has given you similar confidences. The world in which you live is used to seeing fall the veils and coverings with which we drape ourselves in the prudish society of ordinary mortals. Nor would I, perhaps, have detained you here with me merely to talk to you of such feelings and thoughts, if I had not besides something very particular at heart, a great, great favor—”

She had thrown herself down on a sofa and rested there in a careless, picturesque attitude, her arms thrown back gracefully behind her head. Her face was pale as marble, and her lips were slightly parted—but not with a smile.

“A favor?” he asked, absently. “You know, countess, I was prepared to receive a penance. How much sooner—”

“Who knows whether the granting of this favor will not seem to you a penance, and none of the lightest

either!" she hastily interrupted. "In a word, will you make my portrait?"

"Your portrait?"

"Yes; a portrait-statue, sitting or standing, as you like. I confess to you that the thought first came to me this morning. I can't get that beautiful portrait of your charming friend out of my head, though I am not so conceited as to wish to compare myself with this unknown woman, especially in your eyes. I have a special reason for wanting it; I know a foolish man who still finds me young and pretty enough to want my portrait—particularly if it were done by such a master—a friend, from whom I have been separated often and long, and whom I should make very happy if I could send him my effigy as a compensation."

While she delivered this excited speech, Jansen had let his eyes rest on her, without betraying by any sign whether he was disposed to grant her the favor or not. She blushed under this cool, searching look, and cast down her eyes.

"He is beginning to study me already," she thought. "But you mustn't think," she continued, "that I am altogether too modest in my request. He, for whom this master-work is intended, would be ready to pay its weight in gold for even the most hasty sketch from your hand. But it appears as if the undertaking had no great charm for you? Tell me frankly; in any case, we will still remain good friends."

"Countess," he began, for the first time this evening betraying some confusion, "you are really too good—"

"No! You are trying to escape me—now, don't deny it. Perhaps I know the reason which makes you unfavorable to my request. You have delicate duties that you

must regard. If your friend should discover that you had shown the same favor to me as to her—I don't know her, but, for all that, it might be possible, and certainly pardonable, for her to be a little jealous! Am I not right? Isn't it that which makes you hesitate?"

He was silent for a moment. Then, still in an absent way and as if speaking to himself, he said, quietly:

"Jealous? She would certainly have no cause to be."

The unfortunate expression had scarcely passed his lips when a hot and cold shudder passed over him, and he suddenly became conscious what a deadly insult he had uttered. He looked at her in alarm; he saw that all the blood had fled from her cheeks, leaving even her lips a deathly white. But immediately, before he could even recover sufficient self-possession to soften the impression of his words, she forced a pleasant laugh, hastily rose from the sofa and stepped up to him with both her hands extended.

"Thank you, my friend," she said, in her easiest tone; "you are not particularly gallant, but something better and rarer—you are candid. You are right; unless a woman is able to set the whole female sex wild with envy and jealousy, like your beautiful unknown friend, she is not a worthy subject for your art. I really ought to be old enough to see that myself. But, as I said, you are partly to blame for my having hit on such a foolish idea—the portrait of that beautiful woman had turned my head. But now it is in its right place again, and I thank you for your speedy cure. *Prenez que je n'aie rien dit.* That my tardy wish, which perhaps would have been an impudent one even in earlier days, remains our secret, I expect from your chivalry. So—your hand upon it—and *soyons amis!* And now, good-night. Though I am in

no danger of awakening jealousy, I am not old enough yet to be secure from malicious gossip, and—you have already staid longer than is proper.”

In the most painful confusion he attempted to stammer out a few palliating words. But she would not listen to them, and, amid all sorts of pretty speeches and jests, almost hustled him by main force out of the door, which she immediately locked behind him.

No sooner did she find herself alone than her features became transformed ; the smile on her lips faded into a grimace, and a threatening scowl appeared on her smooth forehead. She brushed from her eyelashes the tears of angry humiliation which she had held back too long already, and drew a long, deep breath, as if to save her heart from suffocation. Thus she stood, near the threshold, her little hands clinched tight, gazing motionless at the door through which the man who had insulted her had passed out. If a passionate wish possessed the magic power to kill, Jansen would probably have never left her house alive.

She heard steps in the adjoining cabinet. She looked up, passed her hands across her eyes and seized a glass of water, which she emptied at a single draught. She was herself again. An elderly woman entered cautiously, dressed simply and entirely in black, but with a care which betrayed long practice in the arts of the toilet. Moreover, her manner of speaking and carrying herself showed, at the first glance, that she had once been at home behind the foot-lights. She was apparently well on in the forties ; but her real face was concealed under a coating of paint, very skillfully laid on, and her soft, regular features made no disagreeable impression.

“You are still here, my dear?” cried the countess,

scarcely attempting to conceal a feeling of displeasure. "I thought you had long ago felt bored at your self-chosen part and gone away."

"I have passed an unspeakably pleasurable evening, my dear countess, and wanted to thank you for it. Since I lost my voice and left the stage, I scarcely remember to have heard so much good music in so few hours. Manna in the desert, my dear countess!—manna in the desert! But how lucky it was that I listened to the concert, as I did, in my dark box over there! It is true that he, before whom I particularly wished to avoid appearing, might not have noticed me. Since his new *liaison* he seems to be blind for everything else, and the many years since we last met have done their best to make it hard for him to recognize me. But imagine, countess, that young painter—the same one who got in my way that night when we discovered the burning picture—strayed by chance into your bedroom! Fortunately, he hastily retired again. But it was a bright moonlight night the first time. Who knows whether he did not recognize me again, especially as the picture in the cabinet there—"

"Certainly," nodded the countess, "you are right. Who knows?"

She had not heard a word the other had spoken.

"Oh, my honored patroness!" continued the latter, "if I could only tell you how it infuriated me again to see him—the hard and cruel man who made my poor daughter's life so wretched—enter the room with such a proud, arrogant air, and receive homage everywhere; to hear his voice, and his aggressive speeches that seemed meant to throw down the glove to the whole company—oh, you cannot tell how I hate him! But has not a mother a right to hate the enemy of her daughter?—all the more

when this daughter is so foolish as still to love the man who cast her out of his house, and even begrudged her the consolation of weeping over her wrongs on the neck of her own child?"

She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes in a theatrical manner, as if her grief had overpowered her.

The countess gave her a cold look.

"Don't play comedy before me, my dear," she said, sharply. "According to all that I have heard of your daughter, I don't imagine she is inconsolable. What reasons have you for thinking she still loves him?"

"I know her heart, countess. She is too proud to mourn and weep. But would she not ask her mother to come and live with her, were it not that then she would be obliged to give up ever hearing any news of the child? If she only knew what it cost me to be a spy, so that I can write to her now and then how it fares with her hard-hearted husband—the poor, innocent child! And yet, gracious countess, if I could ever succeed in tying the broken bond again, in freeing this ungrateful, inconstant man from this snare of unworthy passion, in leading him back again to his rightful wife—"

Her voice appeared to be choked with tears. The countess made a movement of impatience.

"Enough!" she said. "It is late, and I am very tired. Still, it is true, something must be done. This man's great talent will go to rack and ruin amid false surroundings and vulgar love affairs, unless some one brings him back into the right path. Come to me again to-morrow forenoon, my dear. We will talk further on the subject then. Adieu!"

She nodded to the singer in an absent way. The latter bowed low before her, and started in haste to leave

the room. As she was crossing the threshold she heard her name called.

"Don't you think me very unbecomingly dressed to-day, dear Johanna? It seems to me I appear very old and haggard in this Venetian coiffure. For that matter, I really ought to have put off the *soirée* altogether; I could hardly keep on my feet, I had such a headache."

"You have this advantage over us, that even suffering makes you appear more beautiful. From my place in my invisible box, I caught words that would prove to you how great injustice you do yourself."

"Flatterer!" laughed the countess, bitterly. "Go away!—do go away! At all events you can't contradict the evidence of my own eyes."

After the singer had gone, Nelida remained for a time standing on the same spot where the former had taken leave of her. She murmured a few words in her mother tongue, and then said in German:

"He wants to do penance, does he? He shall!—he shall!—he shall!"

She stepped in front of the mirror above the fireplace, before which a lamp, nearly out, burned with a weak, red flame. The candles on the piano were burned down almost to the socket. In this dim light her cheeks looked still more wan, her eyes more sunken, and the scowl on her forehead as if it could nevermore be smoothed away.

"Is it really too late for happiness?" she said aloud, in a hollow voice.

She shuddered, for the night wind swept coldly through the room. Slowly she took the rose from her hair and let it fall to the ground, so that the leaves were strewed over the carpet; then she unwound the veil from her head, took out the comb and shook her hair down over her

shoulders. As she did so the blood returned to her cheeks, her eyes sparkled, and she began to be pleased with herself once more. "*Il y a pourtant quelques beaux restes!*" she said to herself. Then, with sunken head, she strode across the *salon*, talking half aloud to herself, and stepped up to the open piano. She struck the keys with her open hand so that they gave forth a loud, harsh discord. She laughed scornfully at this. "He will do penance, will he? He shall!—he shall!—he shall!" and, once more folding her arms across her breast, she stepped into the cabinet and stood still before the young Greek's cartoon. She knew the picture by heart. And yet she stood before it as lost in contemplation as though she saw it for the first time.

Suddenly she felt a hot breath upon her neck. She shuddered slightly and looked round.

Stephanopulos stood behind her.

"Are you crazy?" whispered Nelida. "What are you doing here? Leave me this moment! My maid is coming!"

"She is asleep," whispered the youth. "I told her you would not need her. Do you reproach me, countess?—me, who only live in your smiles—to whom a glance of your eyes is heaven or hell!"

"Hush!" she said, leaving him her hand which he had seized. "You are talking nonsense, my friend. But you have a good voice, and, besides, one cannot be angry with you. *Vous êtes un enfant!*"

CHAPTER X.

ON the morning following the *soirée*, the lieutenant sat in the second story of the same hotel, in the little *salon* which lay between Irene's bedroom and her uncle's. Although he was continually complaining about his wretched vassalage to friendship, he had, nevertheless, presented himself again in good season in order to receive the watch-word for the day. Inasmuch as he had not the faintest regular occupation, this pretext for passing away the hours was, in reality, heartily welcome to him. More than this, Irene's strangely resigned and yet self-reliant character, her repellent manner and almost bluntness, joined as they were with all the charm of youth, attracted him more than he knew or cared to admit.

The Fräulein was still invisible when Schnetz arrived. He found the uncle seated at breakfast, and was forced to listen to his account of his experiences of the excursion, and of his evening at the club. The baron may possibly have been a good dozen years older than the lieutenant, whom he still continued to treat in his frank and jovial manner, just as he had formerly treated the young fellow who, in Africa, had felt flattered to be kindly taken under the wing of his more experienced countryman and initiated into the mysteries of lion-hunting and other noble pastimes. Sixteen years had passed since then. The baron's hair had grown thin, the little rakish mustache on his upper lip had turned gray, his nervous, thick-set figure had rounded out, and, seen from behind, looked almost venerable; while the long, lank figure of his younger

comrade had grown even more spindle-shanked, his face more like parchment, and his movements clumsier than before. For all that the baron let his eyes rest with fatherly satisfaction upon the officer, whom he still called "Schnetz, my dear boy," and patted him encouragingly on the shoulder ; all of which Schnetz, who would have grimly resented any such familiarity from any one else, received with great patience from him.

"*Bonjour, mon vieux!*" cried the baron, with both cheeks full, when Schnetz entered. "My little highness is still resting from the fatigues of a musical entertainment given by a Russian lady here in the hotel. Come, light a cigar. No?—don't be afraid! On neutral ground smoking is allowed. That is the only thing which I, the best guarded of guardians, ever succeeded in carrying through against my ward's wishes. Positively I have regretted a hundred times that I didn't marry, and bring a few lively boys into the world. If they had tyrannized over me, I should know well enough for what sins I had to suffer. Now don't wink for me to speak lower. She is accustomed to hear these sighs of agony from me. She knows that her slave lets his hands and feet be put in chains, but not his tongue. To be sure," he continued, concluding this lamentation—which he had pronounced with far too jolly an air for it to excite serious sympathy—"to be sure, my dear Schnetz, my yoke was never so bearable as it is here in your blessed Munich : before all else, because you have lent your shoulder to the wheel, and I have a substitute in you such as I have wished for in vain at my own house, when my severe little niece has led the old lion-hunter about by her apron-string like a meek lamb."

Then he related how he had made the most charming

acquaintances at the club yesterday, and what a cordial tone he had found there.

"You South Germans are really a fine race of men!" he cried, excitedly. "Everybody is so open, so true-hearted, in his *négligé*, just as God made him. You don't have to feel about a long time until you get through all the padding, and reach something like a human core; but whatever there is in you appears on the surface, and, if it doesn't please, it can't be helped. For that reason, of course, one sometimes comes across a slight roughness, which, however, only does you honor."

Schnetz puckered his mouth to an ironical grimace.

"Allow me, *chère* papa, to remark that you over-estimate us," he said, dryly. "That which you take to be our honest, natural skin is only a flesh-colored material under which the real epidermis lies concealed as securely and as secretly as the nut under its shell. We do well to throw aside our cloaks, because, with us, we do not show ourselves as we are when we do so. Of course, between ourselves we know perfectly well how matters stand, and that we can't make an X into a Y. Believe me, were it not for the drop of Frankish blood that I got from my mother, I should not be so *naïf* as to blurt out our national secret to you. I would leave you to quietly find out for yourself whether, at the end of a year—yes, or even at the end of ten or twenty years—you would have advanced any further in the friendships made yesterday than you did in the first hour; whether you would have succeeded even in penetrating the padding and putting your hand upon a real human heart of flesh and blood. I—much pains as I have taken—never succeeded in doing this. It is true, I myself was so exceedingly ill-humored as to consider it my duty to speak the truth to those

whom I consider my friends. But that is something one must guard against doing here as carefully as against stealing silver spoons. Why has a man a back, unless it is that his friends may abuse him behind it?"

"I know you, *mon vieux*," cried the baron. "When you haven't a pair of shears and some black paper at hand, you cut your caricatures out of the air with your sharp tongue. But I won't allow this jaundiced art of yours to put me out of humor with this beautiful city and its good people. I grumbled sadly when my little highness insisted upon traveling, and taking up her residence further south. Now, nothing could afford me greater pleasure than her whim to settle down here in Munich, of all places, and if she only would decide not to go away from here again at all—"

The entrance of Irene interrupted him. She looked paler than on the day before, and greeted the gentlemen with heavy eyes and a languid movement of her little head, which generally sat so spiritedly and so erect upon her shoulders.

"Dear uncle," she said, "you would do me a great favor if you would consent to take me away from here—into the country, no matter where, if only away from this house. I have passed a night such as I hope I may never pass again, and didn't get a wink of sleep until this morning. You came home too late, and sleep too soundly, to have been disturbed long by the concert and the noise below us. But I—though I got away from the countess's just as early as possible—the music and the noise of the conversation reached my ears through the open windows. It will be just the same every night, for this lady is eternal unrest personified; and her circle expands into the infinite, since she not only patronizes music but all the

other arts as well. So, if you love me, uncle, and don't want me to have a brain fever, see that we leave this house! Don't you too think, Herr von Schnetz, that nothing is left for me but rapid flight?"

Schnetz looked at his friend, from whose jovial face all the sunshine had departed. But he took good care not to come to his aid.

"My dearest child," the baron now ventured to remonstrate in a conciliatory voice, "the idea of rushing off in this wild fashion, after telling our friends only yesterday that it would be much nicer to take up our headquarters here in the town, and to make excursions from here to all points of the compass—"

She did not let him finish his speech.

"Feel how hot my hand is!" she said, pressing two little fingers against his forehead; "that is fever; and you know how people have warned us against the Munich climate. Didn't aunt tell us yesterday that even she intended to fly to the nearest mountains very soon? And besides, I should never think of asking you to shut yourself up with me in a mountain hut. I know very well, uncle, that you can't get on without the city for any length of time. I don't wish to go any further than the lake where we were yesterday; from there you can be back in Munich again in an hour, if you find you cannot stand it any longer. Don't you think this will be the most sensible thing for all parties, Herr von Schnetz?"

"*Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut!*" replied the lieutenant, bowing, with the most serious face in the world. It did not escape his keen eye that this young highness had been battling with some trouble of the heart during the night, and had not yet recovered her usual self-possession. While she was speaking, her eyes wandered about

in an odd way, now toward the window, now toward the door, as if she trembled in fear of some surprise. She pleased him better, however, in this state of excitement than in her usual cool self-possession; he felt a curious sympathy for her beautiful youth, that had no friend and adviser to consult, except an old bachelor whose susceptibilities were none of the most delicate.

"In Heaven's name, then!" sighed the latter, casting a droll look upward, "I submit to higher guidance, and acknowledge with gratitude the consideration you have shown toward my poor person in your project. Schnetz will find his way out to us, I suppose—after all a horse can always be found or sent for; there will most likely be a pistol-gallery at hand; and, if all other sports should leave me in the lurch, I can still become an angler on the lake—that most insipid of all pastimes, which I have heretofore regarded with quiet horror from a distance. When shall we be off? Not before this evening, of course?"

"With the next train, uncle. We have only half an hour to spare. Fritz is already at work packing your things, for he had heard from Betty that my trunk was ready. All you will have to do will be to make your own toilet."

The baron broke into a shout of laughter.

"What do you say to that, Schnetz? Abd-el-Kader himself might learn a lesson from this rapidity in breaking camp. Child, child! And my new acquaintances of last night—the stag-party that was arranged for to-morrow—Count Werdenfels, whose collection of weapons I was to go and see—"

"You can send them your excuses by letter from Starnberg, dear uncle. And truly I would not hurry so if there

were any other way of avoiding taking leave in person of our fellow-guest down stairs. But, if we go off at once, these two lines, which the waiter will give her as soon as we are gone, will be sufficient."

She produced a visiting-card, on which she had already written a word of farewell.

"The note already written, too! *La letterina eccola qua!*" cried the baron. "Child, your genius for command is so sublime that subordination under your flag becomes a pleasure, and blind submission a matter of honor. In five minutes I will be ready for the journey."

With comical gallantry he kissed the girl's hand, who had listened to all his jests in a preoccupied and serious way, gave his friend a look that seemed to say: "I yield to force!" and rushed out of the room.

Schnetz was left alone with the Fräulein. A feeling that was almost fatherly in its tenderness passed over him as he looked at the serious young face.

"Perhaps," he thought, "it needs but a first word, a light touch, and this young heart that is full to the brim will overflow and be relieved."

But, before he could even open his lips, she said suddenly:

"I do hope Starnberg is not such a great resort for artists as the other places in the Bavarian mountains, of which my cousins have told me."

He looked at her in amazement.

"You hope so, Fräulein? And what possible reason can you have for not wishing it to be such a place? Artists are, as a rule, among the most harmless of God's creatures, and can hardly be said to disfigure a fine region with their umbrellas and camp-stools."

"And yet, last evening, I made the acquaintance of

one of these artists at the countess's below. The tone which he adopted—

“Do you recollect his name?”

“No ; but perhaps you know him—a young man in a violet velvet jacket.”

Schnetz gave a loud laugh.

“Why do you laugh?”

“I beg a thousand pardons, *Fräulein*—it really is not a matter to be laughed at. This honest fellow—our secret poet—I know him down to the very folds in his historical velvet jacket. What, in the name of wonder, were the thorns that this *Rosebud* presented for you to scratch your delicate skin upon?”

“I must submit to let you think me a prudish fool, who takes offense at every light word, *Herr von Schnetz*,” said she, with some asperity. “I do not care to repeat the conversation of your friend. If he is one of the most inoffensive of men, I would rather avoid a place where one is forced to meet people of his stamp at every step.”

She turned away and stepped to the window.

“My dearest *Fräulein*,” she now heard *Schnetz*’s voice say behind her, “you are ill, seriously ill ; I don’t know whether in body ; but certainly there is a wounded spot somewhere in your mental organization.”

She turned round upon him quickly.

“I must confess, *Herr von Schnetz*,” she said, with her proudest look, “I really do not understand—”

“A sick person is very often unconscious that anything is wrong with him,” continued *Schnetz*, unmoved, pulling at his imperial. “But it is impossible that you could have seen this picture of the most innocent of all mortals in such distortion, unless your eye had been clouded by illness. My dear *Fräulein*—no, don’t look at me so

ungraciously ; you cannot deceive me by so doing ; and at the risk of incurring your direful wrath, I don't see why you shouldn't listen to an honest word from a fatherly friend. I do not know whether you have many other friends ; but, as far as I know, there is no one here who takes a more cordial interest in you than my not particularly attractive self—no one in whom you could more safely confide. Dearest Fräulein, if you would only consent to open that proud little mouth and tell me whether I can help you ; whether what you experienced last night—for it is impossible that it is friend Rosenbusch who has suddenly given you such a distaste for your stay in this city—”

“Thank you,” she said, interrupting him suddenly ; “I believe you mean kindly toward me. Here is my hand on it ; and, if I ever need counsel or help, you shall be the first and only man to whom I will turn. But you are mistaken if you think I—I—”

She suddenly checked herself, her eyes filled with heavy drops, and her voice failed her ; but she controlled herself, and smiled upon him so kindly that he could not help admiring the brave young heart.

“All the better,” he said. “I am too well bred to doubt the word of a lady. And the assurance you give me is so precious—”

“Here is my hand on it ! Here's to our true friendship, Herr von Schnetz, and— Of course I don't need to ask you not to say anything to uncle ; he undoubtedly means well with me, but he knows so little—less than you who saw me for the first time only a week ago.”

She put her finger to her lips and looked listeningly toward the door, behind which the baron's footsteps could now be heard. Schnetz had only time, while cordially

pressing the hand she offered him, to nod to her that the pact just concluded should remain her secret, when her uncle stepped in again in complete traveling costume, and began to urge on the preparations for departure as zealously as he had before protested against the flight.

Schnetz got into the carriage with them, in order to accompany the uncle and niece to the station. The curtains were drawn down on the first floor of the hotel. The countess was still sleeping. As far as she was concerned, Irene would have had no need to pull down her veil over her face before she got into the carriage. But from behind it her eyes wandered restlessly hither and thither, across the square and through the streets ; for she feared that he from whom she was fleeing might have taken up his post somewhere in the vicinity, in order to keep watch upon her movements.

He was nowhere to be seen. She noticed, on the other hand, a beautiful blonde lady who happened to be crossing the square just at that moment, accompanied by a rather insignificant-looking female companion and a male escort, and who had to stand still in order to let the carriage pass. Schnetz did not recognize them until they had gone by, but then he waved his hat excitedly by way of greeting, and gazed after them for some time longer.

“Who was that you were bowing to?” asked Irene.

“Take a good look at that man, my dear Fräulein. He is only a sculptor, not yet as celebrated as he deserves to be, and by birth the son of a peasant. But I have never known a man of more genuine nobility, and he alone would make the bad society in which I delight to move the very best in the world. Of the two ladies one

is a painter, a very good person and not a bad artist by any means, while the beautiful one on Jansen's left—"

"Jansen?"

"Do you know the name? Perhaps you have already seen some of his works?"

She stammered out a confused answer, and leaned far out of the carriage as if she wanted to take another look at the party. All her blood had mounted to her cheeks.

So that was he with whom Felix now passed his days, that friend of his youth whose presence and society made up for all lost happiness!

A secret jealousy, which she was ashamed to admit even to herself, arose within her. Luckily for her the carriage drew up a few minutes after before the entrance of the station; and in the confusion of getting out and taking leave of their faithful companion, she was able to recover herself so far as to throw back her veil once more and to exact from Schnetz, with the merriest mien in the world, a promise that he would come out to the lake and visit them very, very soon.

The whistle of the locomotive had long died away, and our friend stood in the middle of the square, like a post, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!*" he growled at length, as a clumsy peasant ran against him and roused him from his reverie. "It is curious how our feelings toward people change. Only yesterday these two were in my way, and I would have given a good deal to have been released from my woman-service. And now I feel wretchedly bored without the little highness, and as if I were of no use to anybody. If I were not an old fellow and past all child's-play, and had not such a good wife, I almost believe— *Tonnerre de Dieu!*"

And slowly, humming a French soldiers' song between his teeth, he wended his way home, which to-day, for the first time, appeared to him as sad and solitary as it really was.

CHAPTER XI.

IN the mean while Jansen and his two companions had gone on their way, too much occupied with their own thoughts to think about the company in which Schnetz had driven by. They were not, indeed, taking an ordinary morning walk, for it had no less an object in view than to make a child acquainted with its new mother for the first time—yes, even more than this. The evening before Julie had expressed her ardent wish to take the child under her own care at once; the plan to take an apartment with Angelica had been given up again, for this good soul could not bring herself to leave the people with whom she was staying, who lived in great part from what she paid them. So Julie had plenty of room; and, though she said nothing about it, no doubt the consideration that the presence of the child would do much to lighten the trial year, both for herself and her lover, had a great deal to do in determining her. Since everything that made the bond between them stronger could not but be very welcome to Jansen, it was decided to put the plan into execution on the very next day.

But though Jansen had welcomed and urged the idea most eagerly, he became more and more doubtful, as the hour for putting it into execution drew near, whether he should succeed without some trouble in removing the child from the associations to which it was accustomed,

and placing it amid entirely new relations. Julie felt no less nervous ; what had seemed to her the evening before to be easy and self-evident, appeared to her now in broad daylight as an audacious undertaking that made her heart beat more anxiously the nearer they approached to their goal. What if the child should not take to her? What if she, try as hard as she would, should not be able to take it to her heart at once?—or should not be able to learn the art of managing it rightly?

The thought made her silent, and she involuntarily walked more slowly. Jansen, too, slackened his pace, so that the good Angelica, who walked along with them quite cheerful and free from care, was obliged to stand still every few minutes in order to wait for the stragglers.

But she did not lose her good-nature. On the contrary, it seemed as though the happiness of her adored friend, the share in it which fell to her as the patron saint of the secret union, and, by no means least, the authority which her position as protectress gave her over her honored master, tended to excite her humor in an unusual degree, so that she delivered the drollest speeches entirely on her own account, whenever the other two abused too flagrantly the privilege of being tiresome—a privilege that belongs by right to all lovers.

“Children,” she cried, standing still again and fanning her heated face with her handkerchief, “this is the first time in my life that I ever ‘played the elephant’ to a pair of secret lovers, but I swear by the ball on the tower of that Protestant church never to do so again, unless I am provided with an equipage at the very least ! That you are not very entertaining I find to be quite in order, and at all events much better than if you should perpetually

speak in sonnets, like *Romeo* and *Juliet*—which I find highly absurd even on the stage. But to creep along at your side through this Sahara-like glare, while you walk at a snail's-pace, since you no longer feel external heat because of the flames within, is more than an elderly girl of my complexion can stand. So we will jump into the next droschke, where I can close my eyes and ponder why it is that love, which is after all such a pleasurable invention, generally makes the most sensible people melancholy."

Jansen's home lay in one of the old lanes between the city and the Au suburb. Any one wandering along here by the side of the babbling brook, a small tributary of the Isar, and seeing the low cottages with their little front gardens and courtyards, and picturesque gables, might easily imagine himself transported far away from the city and set down in one of the country towns of the middle ages, so quiet and deserted are the streets and ways, and so freely does every one pursue his occupation under the eye of his neighbor, washing his linen and his salad at the same well and sitting in his shirt-sleeves before his door. The house of our friend stood a little back, in a sort of blind-alley, so that you could not drive up to the door. It belonged to an honest and hard-working man who had formerly been a teacher in one of the provincial industrial schools, and who was now employed as an engineer by different railways. As his work obliged him to travel during many months of the year, he had invited his wife's mother to come and live with him and give company and assistance to his little wife—a cheery, practical woman from the Palatinate, sound to the core both in body and soul. The mother was an excellent old woman, who, although rather deaf, knew so well how to

get on with the children that the little ones desired no better company than their grandmamma, who read all their little wishes in their eyes.

She was sitting in her accustomed place in the deep window-niche, with her youngest grandchild, who was barely two years old, on her knee, and her five-year-old foster-child on a stool at her feet, when the door opened and her daughter, the sculptor, and the two ladies, walked in. Jansen was an especial favorite of hers, and his child held as warm a place in her heart as her own grandchildren. And so it was natural, when, without any preparation or notice, these two strange Fräuleins, of whom one was striking beautiful, were introduced to her as relations of the sculptor who wanted to see little Frances, that she had a feeling there was something wrong about the matter; especially as one of the strange ladies, the beautiful one, immediately took up the little girl, who made great eyes at her, kissed and caressed her, and took out all sorts of sweetmeats and toys from her pocket, with which she tried to gain the child's friendship. Jansen sat near her, silent, his face wearing a peculiar expression. For the first time his child struck him as not looking so pretty or to so much advantage as he could have wished. It had, to be sure, feature for feature, the face of its father, and fortunately his clear, flashing eyes as well; and in addition to this a head of dark-brown hair and black eyebrows, which made the eyes appear still more brilliant. Moreover, it evidently took a strong fancy to the beautiful "aunt," who brought it such nice things, and it behaved altogether with great propriety considering its few years. But, for all that, a certain uneasiness weighed upon all the people in the little room, as they sat together on the sofa or round the table. Neither Jansen nor Julie

had considered how they should properly clothe their project in words, since their relation to one another heretofore had borne none of the usual names, and it might not be so easy to explain to these simple-minded women what was meant by the engagement of a married man, and the maternal rights of his "bride" to his child.

It is very possible they had both counted on the aid of their good "elephant," who, as a general thing, was never at a loss for a word on either serious or pleasant occasions. But Angelica also seemed to have left her humor outside, when she entered this peaceful little chamber. She only had sufficient tact to admire the other children, and to devote herself especially to the little two-year nestling, whom she pronounced to be "a charming little rascal, with true Rubens coloring."

Thus a good half hour passed away ; every subject was exhausted which could possibly be broached on a first visit, and still the main topic had not been touched upon. Then at last the little housewife, who had now and then exchanged a meaning look with the old woman in the window corner, came to the aid of her old friend and lodger by rising and requesting him to step into the adjoining room with her for a moment, as she had something to say to him that would be of no interest to the ladies.

So she led him into her absent husband's study, shut and locked the door behind her, and, the moment she was alone with him, plunged into the heart of the matter.

"Dear friend," she said, in her rapid Palatinate dialect, dropping all the *n*'s at the ends of her words, and introducing a number of those pretty turns of speech that flow so charmingly from the lips of pretty Palatinate women, "now just tell me straightforwardly what all this means.

Do you seriously suppose you can pull the wool over my eyes, or that I sha'n't see that this charming woman is your sweetheart or something of that sort, and not a mere cousin in the seventeenth degree? Now, I most certainly have nothing against it if you admire a beautiful *Fräulein*; that is your privilege as an artist, and besides you are no old beau with silver locks; and this woman could almost steal my own heart away if I were a man. But there is something behind it all in this case, and you need not try to convince me of the contrary; and this fondling and fussing over the child has some reason. Didn't she ask whether little Frances would like to come with her and see all the pretty things she had in her house? Now, I know well enough, dear Jansen, that if it were any ordinary attachment she would have no wish to entice to her a child who would perpetually remind her admirer of his earlier relations."

"You have guessed the secret, my good woman," answered Jansen, as he pressed her hand with a feeling of relief. "You are as wise as the day is long, and would steal the most secret plans from the bosom of a much more skillful diplomatist than I am. And who has a better right than you, dear friend, to know all that concerns our dear child, whom you have always cared for with the faithfulness of a mother? But now listen to me quietly. It is truly a strange story, and the right way through the maze is not so clear. But, if you only knew that wonderful being as well as I do—"

And then he began to tell the history of the last few weeks to the woman, who listened with great attention to all he said; and closed by saying that he did not like under these circumstances to dissuade Julie from taking the child to live with her, especially when, in beginning

to care for that which was dearer to him than all else except herself, she would be giving him a new proof of how earnestly she desired his happiness.

He had grown so earnest over his story that, when he came to an end, nothing seemed more natural and right to him than this opinion. He was, therefore, very much amazed when the little woman said to him, with a doubtful expression, and speaking, against her wont, very slowly and solemnly :

“You mustn’t be offended with me, dear friend, but if you did this you would make the most foolish mistake it would be possible for you to make in your position and at your age. There ! Now you know it, and though it may not sound very polite, it is my opinion nevertheless, and most certainly my mother’s also ; and, if you have not the heart to tell it, I myself will say it to the beautiful Fräulein’s face, with all the love and esteem of which she may be in every respect worthy. What ? I am to give up the child to a single woman with whom its father is in love ? To a beautiful lady who never has learned how such a little plant as this should be watered, or trained when it shows signs of growing crooked, or how much air and sunshine it needs ?”

“Of course we should get an experienced nurse,” he ventured meekly to suggest.

The excitable little woman, who had become quite red in the face in her zeal, gave him a side glance full of pity and reproach.

“So,” she said, “a nurse ! So you think, I suppose, that this ought to make me quite contented ? No ; and though you are the own father of the child ten times over and I only the foster-mother, still for all that I will take the liberty of telling you that you don’t know anything

about it, and only talk as you do because you are blindly in love. Oh, my good friend, do you think then that, because I have no right to say: 'I will not allow it—I will not give up the child that I have long loved as dearly as my own,' therefore I would not fight hand and foot if anything should befall her that would be as dangerous to her as if you should give her brandy to drink? Yes, you may stare at me as much as you like, it is as I say! A child belongs only amid pure relations—don't be angry at the expression. What will you say to little Frances when she asks whether the beautiful lady with whom she lives is her papa's wife, because he always kisses and caresses her when he comes and goes, just as her foster-mother's husband used to do with his wife, only perhaps even more tenderly? Do you imagine the dear little thing hasn't eyes in her head, and very wise thoughts behind them? And no matter with what propriety you may act, there is something not quite right about the whole matter. Your Fräulein sweetheart has her head full of other things than what the child needs, and won't sit and talk and play and learn with her all day long, like grandmamma and our other children. Think the matter over again, and then put the plan out of your mind. Don't you remember you have often said to me that you would be glad if you only knew some way in which to repay me for my love and care for your child, and I always laughed at you for talking such nonsense? But to-day I do not laugh at all—to-day I tell you very seriously, if you really think you owe me anything, then pay me by saying that you will not take the child away from me, but will leave her here where she is happy."

She extended both her hands to him, which he seized and pressed heartily, though still with averted face.

"My best friend," he said, "you mean so well by our child—"

"And by her father, too!" she eagerly continued; "and even by her father's beautiful friend, with whom I have no need to eat salt in order to believe all the good you have said of her. But, for that very reason and because we are on this subject, do make a hearty resolve, dear Jansen, and procure the divorce *now* at any price and as soon as possible. You see, I am but a simple woman and have not seen much of the world, but still I have seen enough to know that even with the best intentions everything can't go exactly according to rule; and if you artists sometimes overstep the bounds rather more than is necessary, still you are not one of the kind who would do such a thing merely out of wantonness. And I know, too, why you haven't wanted things to be any different heretofore. But now—believe me, now you owe it to three beings to provide a pure atmosphere in which you can begin a new life. And, though you shake your head even now, as much as to say it is impossible, believe me—"

The door was suddenly thrown open, and little Frances came jumping in, holding a candied fruit in her hand, of which she had taken a bite, and which she insisted upon the little foster-mother's tasting too. Jansen took the dear little creature in his arms, pressed her passionately to his breast, and kissed her bright eyes. Then he gave her back to the little wife and said, in a voice choked with emotion :

"There, you have her again! God reward you for your kindness and good sense. We will finish our talk some other time."

He stepped into the room again where his two friends

had been waiting, their conversation confined to a rather tiresome attempt to make themselves understood by the deaf old woman. Julie read in Jansen's eyes that his interview had not met with the desired success ; but, hard as it was for her to relinquish her plan and not to take the child with her at once, she refrained from all hasty objections, and rested content with the promise that little Frances should soon visit her.

It was only after they were in the carriage that Jansen informed her of the objections raised by the little woman. Julie listened in silence, with downcast eyes and burning cheeks. Angelica, on the contrary, attempted, in her droll way, to protest against this project, to which she, as the protecting genius of the two foolish lovers, had given her consent, being considered so very wild and impracticable. By imperceptible degrees, however, she passed from scolding the capricious little woman to praising her, maintaining that she, as a portrait-painter, was a sufficiently good judge of human nature to know at once what sort of a character lay behind any face. And, consequently, she could not help admitting that, if the dear child was not to be with Julie, there was no place in the world where it would be better cared for than in this house.

Julie persisted in her silence. Her heart had grown heavy ; she began, for the first time, to have a presentiment that her great happiness was not to be all sunshine, that storms were lowering on the horizon which the first gust of wind might roll across the sky, and cause to break upon the heads of herself and her lover.

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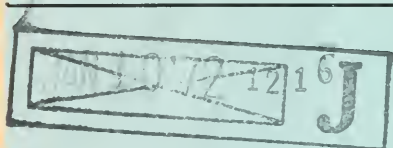
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